

The Excellence of Charity

By Sh. Waleed Basyouni





Charity?

That great deed and great saving!

My dear brother! Have you ever thought of being among the charitable ones?

Have you thought of charity's great reward and its impact?

There are several important matters about charity that I would like to share with you:



1. Charity is a Great Act of Worship

Imam Aḥmad mentioned the following in regards to charity:

Ḥadīth: The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “When the angels saw how great mountains were, they asked: ‘O our Lord! Did you create anything greater and stronger than the mountains?’ He said: ‘Indeed, I did.’ They said, ‘What was it?’ He said: ‘The iron.’ They asked: ‘Did you create anything stronger than the iron?’ He said: ‘Indeed, I did!’ They asked: ‘And what was it?’ He said, ‘The fire -as it melts the iron-’ They asked again, ‘Did you create anything stronger than the fire?’ He said: ‘Indeed, I did: the water.’ They asked again: ‘Did you create anything stronger than the water?’ He said: ‘Indeed, I did: the believer who hides his charity so that his left [hand] does not know what his right hand [has] spent.’” [Based on ḥadīth in Jamī Al-Tirmidhi, Book 47, Ḥadīth 3695]

Allāh (subhānahu wa ta‘āla) says:

قُلْ لِعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا
وَعَلَانِيَةً مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خُللٌ

“Tell My servants who have believed to establish prayer and spend from what We have provided them, secretly and publicly, before a Day comes in which there will be no exchange, nor any friendships.”

[Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14:31]

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ
وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“And spend on the cause of Allāh”

[Sūrat'l-Baqarah. 2:195]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا
بِئْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شُفْعَةٌ ۚ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

“O you who believe! Spend [in charity] from that which we have provided for you”

[Sūrat'l-Baqarah. 2:254]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا
لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ
بِأَخْذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

“O you who believe! Spend [in charity] from the pure [things] that you have earned.”

[Sūrat'l-Baqarah. 2:267]

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا
لِلْأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۚ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ ۚ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“So be conscious of Allāh the best you can and listen and obey and spend [in the way of Allāh]; it is better for your selves. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.”

[Sūrat'l-Taghābūn, 64:16]

There are also several *aḥādīth* that show the virtues of charity:

Ḥadīth: The Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) had said: “Every one of you will be brought before Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*), and that Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*) will speak to you without an interpreter between you two, while you will look to your right and will see nothing but what you have brought forward, and look to your left and will only see that which you have brought forward, and will look in front of you and will see Hellfire ahead of you, so protect yourselves from the Fire even with a half of a date.” [Narrated by Bukhāri and Muslim]

Ḥadīth: “The caretaker of the widow and the needy is at the same level as the one who fights in the cause of Allāh or the one who prays the night and fasts the day.” [Narrated by Bukhāri and Muslim]

Ḥadīth: “The best of deeds is to bring happiness into your brother among the believers, or to pay his debt, or feed him [from your] bread.” [Narrated by al-Bayhaqī and Ibn Abi al-Dunya]

These texts indicate the great virtue and status of charity that is rarely found in regards to any other deed. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (*radīAllāhu ‘anhu*) said: “It was mentioned to me that deeds would compete amongst each other and brag, and charity would say: ‘I am your best.’” [Reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ al Targhīb*]*

Abu Dharr al-Ghifāri (*radīAllāhu ‘anhu*) said: “Prayer is the Pillar of Islam, *jihād* is the hump of all deeds, yet charity is something amazing, charity is something amazing, charity is something amazing!”

Charity!

It is a treasure that is out of reach to the snatching hand; a savings account that is not in danger of being hacked or subject to the elements of destruction.

Ibn Mas‘ūd (*radīAllāhu ‘anhu*) said: “If you wish to protect your wealth from being stolen, or compromised, then do so through charity.”



2. There should be no bragging rights for anyone in regards to charity. The benefit is only due to Allāh's (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*) favor upon the giver.

The pious predecessors used to give their charity in such a way that the hand of the needy is on top and the hand of the giver is in the bottom, while saying we improve their *dunya* (life on earth) and they improve our *ākhirah* (life in the hereafter). Therefore, one should never think that the needy person is the only one benefiting from the charity. Whoever thinks that way does not really know and appreciate the great reward Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*) has designated for *ṣadaqah*.

*Al-Sha'by said: "Whoever thinks that he is not more needy for the reward of his charity than the needy person for the charity itself has indeed nullified his charity and slapped his face with it."

Abu Sufyān al-Thawri used to feel so happy whenever a needy person knocked at his door asking for help. He would greet him saying: "Welcome to you who came to wash away my sins."

Al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād used to say: "The best deal ever is the one that we get from the needy who take our charity! They carry our provision for the Hereafter, without asking any wages until they place it on the scale before Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*)."

That is how these righteous scholars understood charity. So never forget this meaning, as there are many who give in charity but do not remember these meanings. It would be better for them to live the great moments of this great deed inside their hearts so as to find and feel its sweetness.

Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*) says:

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ
خَيْرٍ فَلِأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۚ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا
مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ

“Not upon you, [O Muḥammad], is [responsibility for] their guidance, but Allāh guides whom He wills. And whatever good you [believers] spend is for yourselves, and you do not spend except seeking the countenance of Allāh. And whatever you spend of good - it will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged.”

[Sūrat'l-Baqarah. 2:272]



3. Charity can be big or small, so do not belittle any amount of it!

Some people may see their charity as small, saying ‘what could it do? This charity is too big and this charity is too little!’ There is no such thing as too little or too big in the eyes of Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*). To Him is due all praise and His is all the credit and gratitude. As long as this charity is being given out for the sake of Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*) alone, then the giver or the taker should never belittle it no matter how small. Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*) is the All Generous. He multiplies good deeds many times over, and in this multiplying, a small deed can become a massive one. Never forget that while you are giving your charity to someone. You are dealing with Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*). He is the Only One in authority and to Him all matters return.

Ibn ‘Umar said: “Every good deed is multiplied ten folds except for charity; it starts with seven hundred folds.”

Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*) said:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ
سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضْعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ
وَسِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (٢٦١)

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا
أَذَى لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٦٢﴾

“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allāh multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allāh is all-Encompassing and Knowing. Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh and then do not follow up what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] injury will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

[Sūrat'l-Baqarah. 2:261-262]

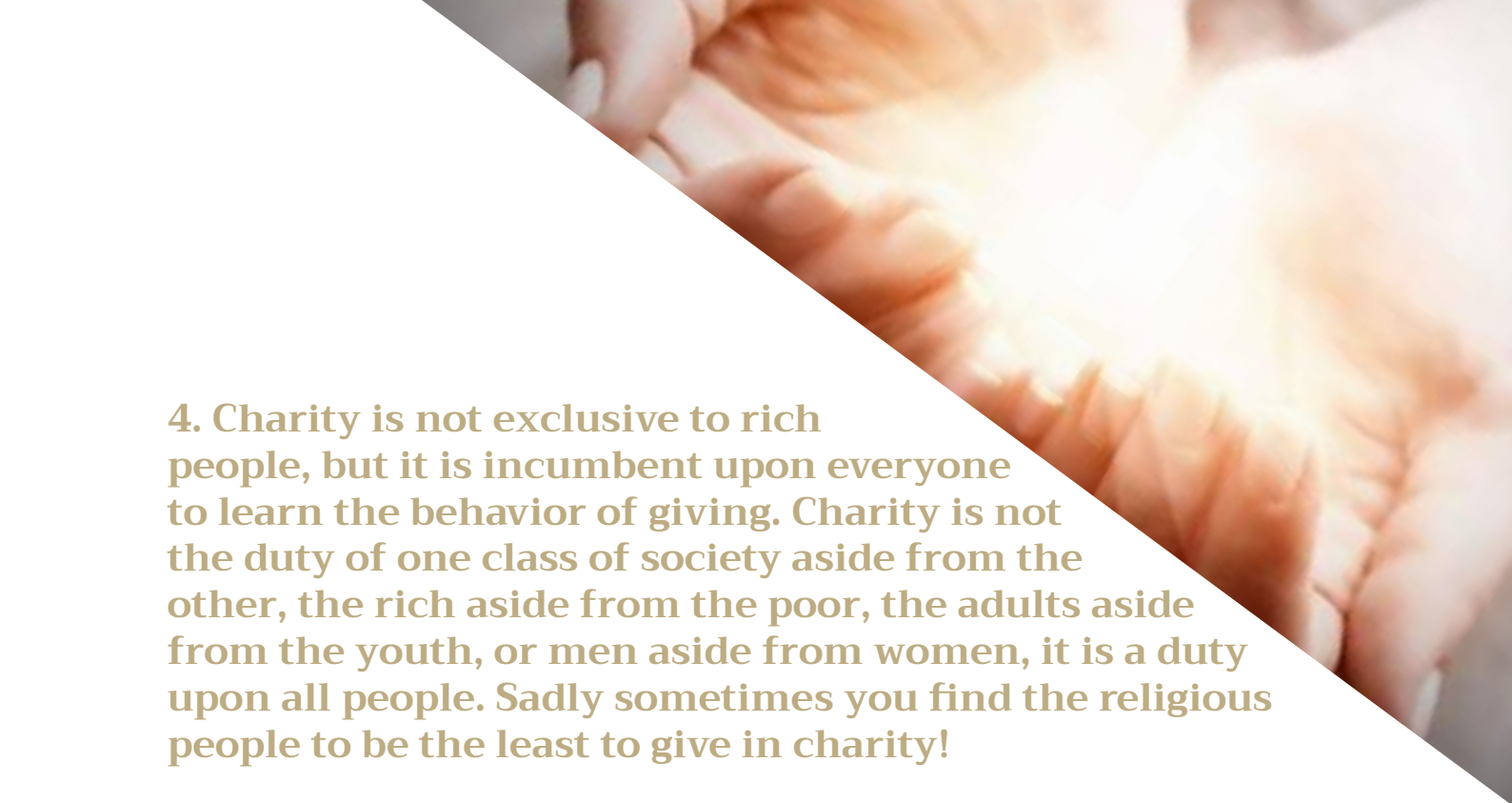
Hadīth: The Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “No one would give in charity from that which is pure, and Allāh only accepts that which is pure, but that Al-Raḥmān would take it in His right hand, even if it were a date, so it will grow in His palm until it becomes greater than the mountain! As one of you would grow his foal or its like.” [Narrated by Bukhāri and Muslim, and this is Muslim’s wording]

Hadīth: He also said: “One dirham has outweighed a hundred thousand!” They asked: “How is that O Messenger of Allāh?” He said: “A man who only had two dirhams gave one dirham in charity. While another man had great wealth, so he took from the midst of his wealth a hundred thousand and gave it in charity.” [Narrated by al-Nasa’ī]

Ibn Mas‘ūd (radīAllāhu ‘anhu) said: “There was a man who worshipped Allāh seventy years, then he committed an obscene sin (e.g.: adultery), which negated all of his good deeds. He then passed by a needy man and gave him a loaf of bread, hence Allāh forgave him his sin, and gave him back his seventy years’ worth of good deeds.”

Hadīth: Remember what the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “Protect yourself from the punishment of Hellfire even with a half of a date! But if you don’t find then with a kind word.” [Bukhāri]

Yahya in Mu‘ādh said, “I don’t know anything that weighs as the mountains of the earth, except charity.”



4. Charity is not exclusive to rich people, but it is incumbent upon everyone to learn the behavior of giving. Charity is not the duty of one class of society aside from the other, the rich aside from the poor, the adults aside from the youth, or men aside from women, it is a duty upon all people. Sadly sometimes you find the religious people to be the least to give in charity!

Think about how charity was a lifestyle for the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and his companions. He used to be amongst the generous people and was the most generous during Ramadan. Yūsuf (‘alayhi’l-salām) used to give his food as charity to his prison inmates while fasting.

Hadīth: The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) once advised Bilāl (raḍyAllāhu ‘anhu) by saying: “Give [in charity] O Bilāl! And never fear that the Lord of the Great Throne would decrease what He gives you” [reported by *al-Bazzar* and *al-Ṭabarāni* / *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’* 1512]

Hadīth: Abu Hurayrah narrated that he asked the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam), “O Messenger of Allāh! Which charity is best?” The Messenger of Allāh said, “The giving of the one who has little means, and start [by looking after] those who are your responsibility.” [Abu Dāwūd / *Ṣaḥīḥ Abu Dāwūd* by Albāni 1677]

Hadīth: Ibn Mas‘ūd (raḍyAllāhu ‘anhu) said, “The Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) used to order us to give in charity. Sometimes we would not find anything to give, so one may go to the market and do labor work (carrying goods on his back), and come back to the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) with a ‘modd’ (a measurement) full (of dates, barley etc.) I know a man who used to do that who had no money at the time; today he has over a hundred thousand (dirham or dinar)” [al-Nasa’i]

Ḥadīth: “O women! Given in charity...” as the Prophet ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam used to tell the women on the day of ‘Īd during the *khuṭbah*, and sometimes he would go near them and exhort them to give in charity.

To give in charity while healthy and strong is better than writing it in your will to be given after your death, or while dying.

Ḥadīth: The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “The best charity is what you give while healthy and needy, hoping to become wealthy and fearing poverty. Do not wait until when the soul reaches your throat, you say, ‘this is for this person and that person.’” [narrated in Bukhāri and Muslim]



5. Do not be afraid that charity will make you poor!

Allāh (subhānahu wa ta‘āla) said:

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ ۖ وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ
مِّن شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُ ۖ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

[Sūrah Sabā' 34:39]

Ibn ‘Abbās (radīAllāhu ‘anhu) said: "Two are from Satan and two are from Allāh" and he read this verse from Sūrat'l-Baqarah:

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْفَحْشَاءِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ
وَفَضْلًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عَلِيمٌ

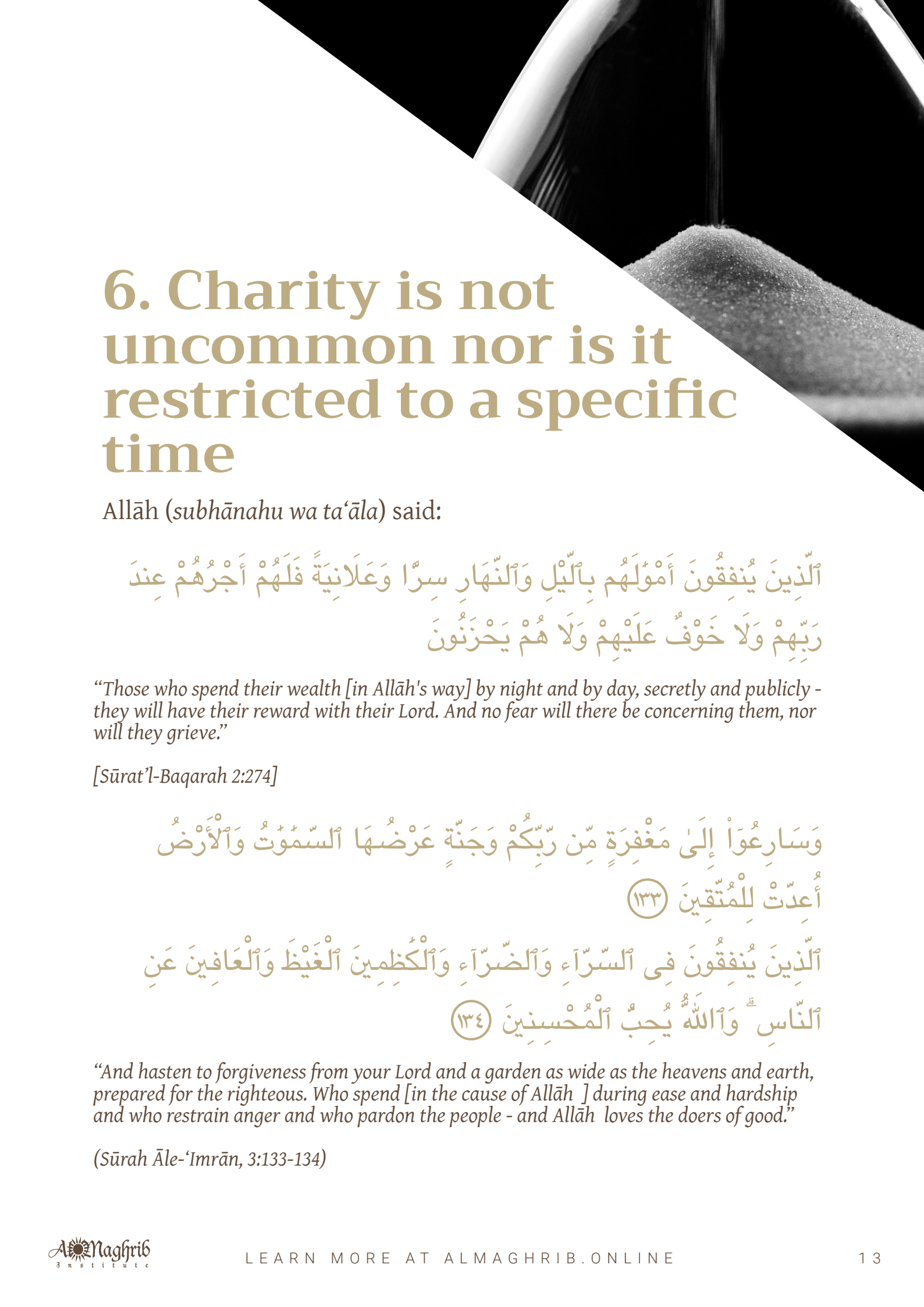
Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to immorality, while Allāh (subhānahu wa ta‘āla) promises you forgiveness from Him and bounty. And Allāh (subhānahu wa ta‘āla) is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

[Sūrat'l-Baqarah 2:268]

Al-Qurtubi mentioned in his book of *tafsīr*:

“I have read in 90 places in the Qur’ān that Allāh has decreed the provisions of all creation and that He has guaranteed it, while in one place in the Qur’ān I read that Satan threatens you with poverty. But we had doubts in the ninety true promises of Allāh and believed the single lie of Satan.”

Ḥadīth: *Abu Kabshah al-Anmari said that he heard the Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) saying: “Three things I swear upon them as I instruct you (and be mindful of what I instruct you): a man’s wealth will not decrease because of charity.” [Muslim]

An hourglass with dark sand falling from the top into the bottom, set against a black background. The hourglass is positioned diagonally across the top right of the page.

6. Charity is not uncommon nor is it restricted to a specific time

Allāh (subhānahu wa ta‘āla) said:

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“Those who spend their wealth [in Allāh's way] by night and by day, secretly and publicly - they will have their reward with their Lord. And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

[Sūrat'l-Baqarah 2:274]

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمُوتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ (١٣٣)

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكُظُمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (١٣٤)

“And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous. Who spend [in the cause of Allāh] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allāh loves the doers of good.”

(Sūrah Āle-‘Imrān, 3:133-134)

Ḥadīth: The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “Every day rises upon the people two angels descend upon the earth in the morning one of them saying, “O Allāh! Given everyone spending [in charity] a replacement [for his charity], and the second angel would say, “O Allāh! Give everyone that withholds [from giving in charity] destruction.” [Reported by Bukhāri and Muslim]

*Yazīd said, “[upon hearing that] Abu Murthad would not miss a day except that he would give in charity even if it were a piece of hard bread or an onion.



7. Wisdom in Charity

It is worth noting the beauty of expression in this verse of the Qur'an:

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا
وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

“He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good. And none will remember except those of understanding.”

[Sūrat'l-Baqarah 2:269]

Therefore, one may contemplate the different types of charity and how it is distributed to find that one of the best forms of charity is the *ṣadaqah jāriyah* (the everlasting charity), which is the kind of charity that remains active in its effect and reward even after death.

Hadīth: The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “When a man dies, his record of good deeds will be closed except in three cases: an everlasting charity, beneficial knowledge that man has left behind and a righteous child who will pray for him.” (reported by Muslim)

The following is a list of the different areas where everlasting charity can be:

1. Digging a well to provide drinking water for the people. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The best charity is to provide water for drinking.” [Aḥmad and Abu Dāwūd].
Also Jābir b. ‘Abdullāh (raḍyAllāhu ‘anhu) narrated the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “Whoever digs a well will be rewarded on the Day of Judgment for every animal, *jinn*, man and bird that drinks from it. Whoever builds a masjid [or partake in the building of a masjid] even as small as a bird’s nest, Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*) will build for him a house in paradise.” [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb]
2. Feeding people. The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked “which part of Islam is best?” and he answered: “To feed the people, to offer the greeting of *salām* to those you know and those you do not know.” [Bukhāri and Muslim]
3. Building the *masājid* (mosques). The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “Whoever builds a mosque while only seeking the pleasure of Allāh, Allāh will build for him a house in paradise.” [Bukhāri and Muslim]
4. Sponsoring *da‘wah* projects, the scholars, and the students of knowledge.
5. Printing the Qur’ān and the beneficial books as well as creating apps to help spread the knowledge that benefits the people.

Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*) said:

وَأَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ
لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ فَأَصَّدَّقَ وَأَكُنْ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

“And spend [in the way of Allāh] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, ‘My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give in charity and be among the righteous.’ But never will Allāh delay a soul when its time has come. And Allāh is well acquainted with what you do.”

[Sūrat’l-Munāfiqūn, 63:10]

How many people departed without provision!
They have left behind their wealth and bid farewell to their
worldly blessings
They departed carrying their regrets...
They departed facing the consequences!
Neither wealth have they put forward for their return
Nor with them have they carried it ...
Only to their heirs have they left it behind
Such is your case tomorrow ... a tale from so many tales
For those to amuse by as the sun sets!



8. Charity is Universal

It is an act of worship that is done to benefit all people regardless of their religion or level of righteousness and conviction. So it is given to Muslims as well as non-Muslims, the righteous and the sinner. It even transcends humankind to include animals as in the case of feeding animals, treating their illnesses and providing them with shelter. Regardless of the subject, charity is rewarded if it is only meant to be done for the sake of Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*).

Some people think when they spend on their relatives and family members that it is not charity, but it is a charity to spend on your family as well as strangers. Similarly, people may think that charity is only what you spend on your fellow Muslims and believers, but that is not the case. Charity is more universal and comprehensive than just being limited to Muslims, human beings, strangers. The recipients of charity are more diversified than that.

One only need to examine certain texts of Qur'ān and *Sunnah* to find the proof.

Hadīth: Imams al-Bukhāri and Muslim narrated from Abu Mas'ūd al-Badri (*radīAllāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: “When a man spends on his family while intending to please Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*), it will be counted for him as charity.”

Ḥadīth: Jābir narrated from the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam): “If one of you is poor, then he should start by taking care of himself, and if there is anything left, then he gives it to his family, and if anything is left after that then he should give to his relatives (or those who are connected to him maternally), and if after that he has more to give, then to those here and there.” [Aḥmad and Muslim]

Ḥadīth: The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) also said: “Give in Charity!” so a man said: “I have a dinar.” The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “spend it on yourself as charity.” Then the man said: “I have another dinar.” The Prophet said: “Give it to your wife.” The man said: “I have another dinar.” The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “Give it to your children.” The man said: “I have another dinar.” The Prophet said: “Give it to your servant.” The man said: “I have another dinar.” The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “You are entitled to do with it as you wish” [Al-Nasa’ī and Abu Dāwūd]

Ḥadīth: Muslim narrated from Thawbān, the servant of the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam), that the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “The best dinar a man spends is a dinar that he spends on his family, and a dinar that he spends on his riding animal in the cause of Allāh, and a dinar that he spends on his companions for the sake of Allāh.” Abu Qulābah said: “He began with the family,” then he commented, “Who is better in reward than the one who spends on his little children, that he protects them from asking people, benefits them and enriches them?”

Ḥadīth: Al- Bukhāri and Muslim narrated from Sa’d b. Abi Waqqāṣ (radīAllāhu ‘anhu) that the Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said to him: “And that you will not spend in charity for the sake of Allāh except that Allāh will reward you for it even a bite that you put in your wife’s mouth.”

As for that which one gives to non-Muslims or to a sinner, it is considered a charity in one condition that it will not be spent on doing anything forbidden.

Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*) said:

“...And they feed from the food which they love those who are indigent, orphans and captives.”

And the captives are those who were captured in battle by the Muslims, meaning they were fighting the Muslims. Abu Hanīfah used this verse to prove the permissibility of giving charity to non-Muslims.

Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*) says:

لَا يَنْهٰكُمُ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يُقْتِلُوْكُمْ فِى الدِّيْنِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوْكُمْ مِّنْ دِيْرِكُمْ اَنْ تَبَرُّوْهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوْا اِلَيْهِمْ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِيْنَ ۝۸
اِنَّمَا يَنْهٰكُمُ اللّٰهُ عَنِ الَّذِيْنَ قَتَلُوْكُمْ فِى الدِّيْنِ وَاَخْرَجُوْكُمْ مِّنْ دِيْرِكُمْ وَظَهَرُوْا عَلٰى اِخْرَاجِكُمْ اَنْ تَوَلَّوْهُمْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ۝۹

“Allāh does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly.”

(Sūrat'l-Mumtaḥanah, 60:8-9)

Hadīth: Asmā' bint Abi Bakr (*radīAllāhu 'anhu*) said: “My mother came to visit me while she was a non-believer. I said: “O Messenger of Allāh! My mother came to visit me and she is desiring something from me, should I give her in kindness? He said, “Yes, be kind to your mother.” [Narrated by al-Bukhārī]

Hadīth: ‘Ā’ishah (*radīAllāhu ‘anha*) said that a Jewish woman asked her for assistance and she gave her. So the Jewish woman prayed for ‘Ā’ishah saying: “May Allāh protect you from the torment of the grave!” but ‘Ā’ishah did not like what she said. So when she saw the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) she told him about that, to which the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said: “No!” ‘Ā’ishah then said: “Then the Messenger of Allāh (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said after that: ‘It has been revealed to me that indeed you will be tested in your graves.’” [Aḥmad]

Hadīth: Abu Hurayrah reported: The Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “A man said, ‘I will indeed give charity,’ so he went out with his charity and placed it in the hands of a thief. In the morning, people were saying: ‘Charity was given to a thief!’ The man said: ‘O Allāh, praise be to you!’ He again intended to give charity, so he went out with his charity and placed it in the hands of an adulteress. In the morning, people were saying: ‘Charity was given to an adulteress in the night!’ The man said: ‘O Allāh, praise be to you for the adulteress!’ He again intended to give charity, so he went out with his charity and placed it in the hands of a wealthy person. In the morning, people were saying: ‘Charity was given to a wealthy person!’ The man said: ‘O Allāh, praise be to you for the thief, and the adulteress, and the wealthy person!’ Then it came to him in a dream and it was said: ‘As for your charity to the thief, perhaps it will cause him to give up theft. As for the adulteress, perhaps it will cause her to give up adultery. As for the wealthy person, perhaps he will learn a lesson and spend in charity from what Allāh has given him.’”

When a man gives charity on behalf of a dead person, both of them will be rewarded for it.

Hadīth: Ibn ‘Abbās (*radīAllāhu ‘anhu*) narrated from Sa’d b. ‘Ubādah that his mother died when he was absent, and he said: “O Messenger of Allāh, my mother has died when I was absent. Will it benefit her if I give in charity on her behalf?” He said: “Yes.” He said: “I ask you to bear witness that my garden that bears fruit is given in charity on her behalf.” Narrated by al-Bukhāri.

Hadīth: ‘Ā’ishah (*radīAllāhu ‘anha*) also narrated that a man came to the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) and said: “O Messenger of Allāh! My mother died suddenly without leaving a will, and I believe if she were able to speak she would have given charity. If I give charity on her behalf, would she be rewarded for it?” He said: “Yes!” [Agreed Upon]

As for charity given to animals, it occurs when one feeds the animal, shelters it, or treats its illness. All of that has been encouraged by Islam.

Hadīth: Abu Hurayrah (May Allāh be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “While a man was walking on his way, he became extremely thirsty. He found a well, he went down into it to drink water. Upon leaving it, he saw a dog which was panting out of thirst. His tongue was lolling out and he was eating moist earth from extreme thirst. The man thought to himself: ‘This dog is extremely thirsty as I was.’ So he descended into the well, filled up his leather sock with water, and holding it in his teeth, climbed up and quenched the thirst of the dog. Allāh appreciated his action and forgave his sins.” The Companions asked: “Shall we be rewarded for showing kindness to the animals also?” He (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “A reward is given in connection with every living creature.” [Al-Bukhārī and Muslim]

In a different narration which is also authentic that the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “While a dog was wandering dying of thirst, a prostitute from the Bani Israel saw him, so she took off her boot and filled it with water and quenched the thirst of the dog, and for that Allāh forgave her.”

Hadīth: Anas b. Mālīk narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charity for him.” [Agreed upon]

And among the polite practices that were mentioned by Al-Bayhaqī in his book *The Branches of Īmān*: “and Adi b. Hātem al-Tā’ī used to break the bread in crumbs to feed the ants, and he used to say: ‘They are my neighbors and they have a right over me.’”

In the fifteenth century, the Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih gave a Royal Decree in which he ordered the building of special houses for birds every time a new mosque, or building is being built. Moreover, there used to be special endowment for the sole purpose of taking care of animals, which will bring back great reward for the one who established such endowments. These are some examples of such endowments: in the City of Fez, there was an endowment to take care of the migrating birds that would pass by Fez in a certain time of the year. This endowment was to help those birds to survive while they were away from their original habitats. It seemed as though the people of Fez felt they were obligated to be good hosts for those guests of birds.

Another endowment was for the purpose of sheltering strayed cats that had nowhere to go. That is what Dr. Mustapha al-Siba'i wrote in his book *Socialism in Islam* describing all such practices that did not miss even the animals which came in a form of a *waqf*, endowment to shelter such domestic animals that did not find food or shelter to provide for them food and shelter, and special care was given to the blind ones. An example for that was "the House of Cats (*bayt'l-qitat*)" that was located in Sarouja market in Damascus until recently. It used to house over four hundred cats that were well fed.

The Virtues and Excellence of Charity

I would like to end with few of the virtues of ṣadaqah that are mentioned in Qur'ān and Sunnah.

1. It extinguishes Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*)'s anger as in the Prophet's (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) statement: "Indeed charity extinguishes the anger of the Lord Blessed be He and Exalted" [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb*]
2. It erases all sins, and cools off their heat as in the Prophet's (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) statement: "...and charity puts out sin as water puts out fire." [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb*]
3. It is a shield from Hellfire as in the Prophet's (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) statement: "Shield yourselves from Hellfire even with a half of a date."
4. The person is shaded by the shade of his/her charity as in the hadith narrated by 'Uqbah b. 'Āmir, he said: "I heard the Messenger of Allāh (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) say: "Every person is in the shade of his charity until all people will have been judged." Also as in the Prophet's (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) statement about the seven who will be shaded by Allāh, at a time when there will be no shade except Allāh's shade: "... and a man who gave in charity in secret that his left hand did not know what his right hand had offered." [*Bukhāri and Muslim*]

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5. Charity is a cure of physical illnesses as in the Prophet’s (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) statement: “Treat your sick ones with charity.” Ibn Shaqīq said, “I heard Ibn al-Mubārak say to a man who was seeking his help in treating an infected wound on his knee which was incurable for seven years, ‘Go find a place where people need drinking water and dig a well for them. I pray that when the water gushes out of that well that the blood in your wound will stop.’ The man did so and his wound healed and was cured.” Another similar story is that of al-Ḥākim b. ‘Abdullāh who had a cut in his face that got infected. His friend saw the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) in a vision telling him to tell his friend to make way for the water to reach people as charity. He did so and Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*) cured him.

6. Charity is a cure for the illnesses of the heart, as in the Prophet's (ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) statement to the man who complained about the hardness of his heart. "If you wish to soften your heart, feed the indigent and wipe over the orphan's head." [Aḥmad]
7. Due to charity, Allāh (subhānahu wa ta'āla) prevents several types of trials and tribulations. This can be understood from the advice of Prophet Yaḥya ('alayhi'l-salām) to the children of Israel: "...and I order you to offer charity. The similitude of it is like a man who was captured by his enemy so they handcuffed him and tied his hands to his neck. When they were about to execute him, he said: 'I ransom myself with anything small or big.' So he did and saved himself." [Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jamī']. So charity has an amazing effect on thwarting all kinds of troubles and difficulties that may face anyone regardless of who they are. Even nonbelievers and wrongdoers can benefit from their charity in this way, which has been proven textually and anecdotally.
8. Charity is one of the ways for a person to realize and achieve true righteousness. Allāh (subhānahu wa ta'āla) says, **"Verily you will not attain [true] righteousness until you have spent [on charity] from that which you love."** (Sūrah Āle-'Imrān, 3:92)
9. The angels pray for those who give in charity, unlike the ones who withhold and do not spend in charity. The Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "Every day rises upon the people two angels descend upon the earth in the morning one of them saying, 'O Allāh! Given everyone spending [in charity] a replacement [for his charity],' and the second angel would say, 'O Allāh! Give everyone that withholds [from giving in charity] destruction.'" [reported by Bukhārī and Muslim]

10. Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*) blesses the wealth of the person who gives charity, as in the statement of the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*): “The wealth of a person will not decrease because of charity.” [Muslim]
11. Charity is what actually remains of man’s wealth. Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*) said: **“Whatever you spend of good [in charity] is for you.” (Sūrat’l-Baqarah, 2:272)** When the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) asked ‘Ā’ishah (*radyAllāhu ‘anha*) about what was left of the sheep that they had earlier, she said that she gave away all of it except for the shoulder. He said, “All of it remains except for the shoulder.” [Muslim]
12. Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*) will increase the reward of the charity giver many times over. Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*) said:
 - **“Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allāh a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.” (Sūrat’l-Ḥadīd, 57:18) and**
 - **“Who is it that would lend Allāh a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allāh who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.” (Sūrat’l-Baqarah, 2:245)**
13. The charity giver will be called to enter into paradise from a special gate *bāb as-ṣadaqah*. This was narrated in a *ḥadīth* from Abu Hurayrah who said that the Messenger of Allāh (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: “Whoever spends two of [anything in charity] in the cause of Allāh will be called into paradise, ‘O slave of Allāh! This is good’ so if he was among the people of prayer, he will be called into paradise from the gate of *ṣalāh*. Those who are of the people of *jihād* will be called into paradise from the gate of *jihād*. Those who are the people of charity will be called into paradise from the gate of *ṣadaqah*, and those who are of the people of fasting will be called into paradise from the gate of fasting.” Abu Bakr (*radyAllāhu ‘anhu*) asked: “O Messenger of Allāh! What should the one called from all of those gates do? Or will there be any one called from all of those gates? The Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, “Yes! And I hope that you will be one of them.” [Bukhāri and Muslim]

14. Charity is one of four deeds if done by a person all in one day, such person will be deserving of Paradise. Abu Hurayrah (*radī Allāhu ‘anhu*) narrated that the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) addressed the companions after prayer: “Who among you has started his day fasting?” Abu Bakr said: “I have!” He asked: “Who followed a *janāzah*?” Abu Bakr said, “I did.” “Who visited a sick person?” Abu Bakr said: “I did”; Then the Prophet said, “These deeds when done together by a person, such person will enter paradise.” [Muslim]
15. Charity is a source of peace and comfort for the heart and relief for the chest. The Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) gave an example for the stingy person and another for the charitable person as that of two men who each has a vest of iron that covers them from their bosoms to their necks. As for the one who is charitable, every time he gives charity, his vest is widened and thus the pressure is relieved, on the other hand, the stingy one who is reluctant to give in charity his vest becomes even more constrictive, every time he tries to loosen it, it gets tighter (Bukhāri and Muslim). That is to say, that charity causes the person who gives it to be relieved of anything that may cause his chest to be constricted and his heart to be troubled. It makes him happy, content and at peace. If there is no benefit for charity except this it will be good enough reason for a person to always give charity. Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*) says: **“Whoever is protected from his/her own miserliness, indeed they are the ones who are successful.”** (*Sūrat’l-Ḥashr*, 59:9)
16. The charity that is done by a knowledgeable person will place him in the highest level with Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta‘āla*) as stated by the Messenger of Allāh (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*): “Indeed people in this life are one of four: A man whom Allāh has blessed with knowledge and wealth with which He spends on righteousness and keeping the ties of kinship knowing Allāh’s rights in it... indeed he is in the highest of ranks ...”

17. The Prophet (ﷺ) likened wealth with charity to the one who has the Qur'ān and lives by it. The Prophet made this similitude in this ḥadīth: “There is no envy allowed except in two cases: A man to whom Allāh gave the Qur'ān while he prays with it in the night and the day and a man to whom Allāh gave wealth so he spends from it [in charity] day and night.” How wonderful it is to have both the Qur'ān wealth praying and charity. We ask Allāh to favor us with His Blessings.
18. Charity is proof for the truthfulness of the one who gives it. “Charity is proof.” [Muslim]
19. Charity purifies one's wealth from any impurities that may occur to it as he earns it such as swearing, lying, heedlessness, and any other nonsense. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to address the merchants by saying: “O merchants! Your business may be affected by your idle talk and swearing, so purify it with charity.” [Aḥmad and al-Nasa'ī]