charity is commendable. It does not mean that you should lend money to everyone who asks, or lift & carry the burdens of everyone who is ready to lean upon you. It is as wrong to encourage the man addicted to the vice of borrowing, as the one with the vice of alcohol or drugs. One depends upon his acquaintances to tide him over hard places, instead of upon his own strength of character, and the other depends upon stimulants for the same purpose. The too ready lender is almost as great an evil to humanity as rum or opium, since he too helps a man to kill his own better nature & destroy his selfrespect.

If you were able and willing to pay rents of all the poor people you know, and clothe their children, you would soon produce a condition of settled pauperism among them. Large and frequent favors of a financial nature are an injury to anyone, even if it is your son or brother.

Quran 57:11. Who is it that will offer up unto God a goodly loan, which He will amply repay? For, such as do so shall have a noble reward. Let no man lean on anyone save God and his own divine self.

But little helps, when they are unexpected, arouse hope and awaken new faith and new ambition in a discouraged soul. Look about you for such souls, the worn and weary father of a brood of hungry children, the widow struggling with adverse fate in an effort to clothe and educate a child, the tired shop girl who uses all her earnings to sustain her parents, the ambitious boy or girl eager for a chance in life, and the poor cripple or invalid seeking health. You will find them all about you. **Do not be afraid to use a dollar here or there to give these worthy ones a happy surprise, no matter how poor you are**.

It is an insult to the Opulent Creator to suppose you will suffer want and poverty if you help those who are in temporary misfortune. **You will not**.

We hear of the open-handed generous person who "helped everybody," and who "never refused to aid a needy brother," and who ended their life in penury because of their generosity. Never believe these tales until you investigate them. Invariably you will find not generosity but extravagance & utter lack of forethought, caused the person's financial ruin.

There was a gifted young woman who gave freely to all who asked her assistance and who died a lingering death as a charity patient in a hospital. Yet this young woman had expended ten dollars on foolish and

rapid living where she gave one in charity; it was her wasteful extravagance, not her open heart of sympathy, which made her a pauper.

Altruism: Indiscriminate alms-giving confuses itself with charity, and the momentary impulse which prompts it with altruism, and the true spirit is lost.

It is easy to give without thought—to pander to the self-sufficient sense of generosity, and an ignorant sense of a virtuous deed performed.

No underlying knowledge accompanies the indifferent bestowal, no certainty as to whether good or evil will result, and thus often is abused the noble virtue—altruism. This concerns not itself with the gift, but the giving—in this is depth.

It is the knowledge of why we give that uplifts the bestowal above the sense of pity. Grant a sympathetic understanding, and the acceptance is relieved of the dull weight of obligation—this is felt instinctively by giver and receiver, and the deed passes to fulfill the good intent.

An indolent handing out of alms is the skeleton of altruism—the hidden skeleton of secret troubles—a silent forerunner of degradation, making easy the path of parasitism, easing the material, though transient, difficulties of life, yet lowering the standard of individual existence. The giving of alms is not charity—the giving of one's time to others is not altruism, unless the purpose is fully comprehended. To distinguish the true from the false needs discernment—a calm yet insistent investigation of motives—a knowledge of what we are about. A too close reason for charity is a lurking thing—a despoiler of its worth—Altruism gives heart to the action and divines the right course.

"Do you know what the rights of neighbours are?" asked the Prophet (p). "Help him if he asks you help. Give him relief if he seeks your relief. Lend him if he needs a loan. Show him concern if he is distressed. Nurse him when he is ill. Attend his funeral if he dies. Congratulate him if he meets any good. Sympathize with him if any calamity befalls him. Do not block his air by raising your building high without his permission. Do not harass him." Ahhh...words so sweet. Taste it. Savour it. Drink its nectar. And then HELP those who need it!!!

Take from the blessed hands of the Prophet (p) this action-pill & drink it with tears of compassion: "Prayer carries us half-way to God, fasting brings us to the door of His Palace, & CHARITY procures us admission." The best charity in the end is to show a person the higher life that is possible for them.

WORK HURANA WORK

Charity is a virtue of the heart,

and not of the hands.

The mystic poet Khalil Gibran writes: You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving." The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture. They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish. It is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through understanding.

Dollars planted in the soil of benevolence grow into harvests of prosperity. The person who is not afraid to use their small means to assist others need not fear poverty. I gave a beggar from my little store Of well-earned gold. He spent the shining or And came again & yet again still cold And hungry as before.

I gave a thought,

& through that thought of mine He found himself, the man, supreme, divine Fed, clothed and crowned with blessings manifold, And now he begs no more

man came to the Prophet (p) seeking charity. He gave him an axe to cut & sell wood. The man returned after some time with the good news that he is earning enough to maintain his family. The helping hand of the Prophet (p) saved the man from homelessness.

True charity is what the world wants today, and wants badly—that spirit of tolerance and kindliness which brings its own reward, for we get back from our fellows precisely what we first give them. Envy is met with envy, suspicion with suspicion, dislike with dislike, & charity with charity.

Quran 2:215. They will ask you as to what they should spend on others. Say: "Whatever of your wealth you spend, shall first be for your parents, and for the near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer; and whatever good you do, verily, God has full knowledge thereof."

The above verse teaches that Muslims should be the torchbearers...those who give, and give. Who practices charity like no other, in a brotherhood of mankind like no other. The habit of charity is Muslim through and through, perfected, enjoined, Surah, after Surah after Surah. Zakah is one of the pillars. If only in ritual, charity is a Muslim's birthright and commandment. It is, not, however, only a ritual.

Islam changes society, & the Islamic society demands that those who have, care for those who do not. There are no exceptions, no pulling rank, no holding back. Be warned: Take him away. Fetter him and cast him into the fire that he may broil therein. Bind him in long & heavy chains that he may not move. For he did not believe in God, **NOR DID HE URGE THE FEEDING OF THE POOR**." Quran 69:30-34).

To regard charity as duty essentially related to faith, as religious conviction of God, is to regard it as part of the spiritual system which ought to govern the civilization of the world. Such regard is, indeed, the highest wisdom which can guarantee wisdom to man. The pursuit & acquisition of wealth, its use as an instrument of dominion of man over man, have always been and are the cause of the misery of the world, of revolutions which has destroyed human fraternity and planted enmity between man and man.

Were men truly convinced of God, they would realize this fraternity toward one another, and they would fulfill, as the least requirement of such a fraternity, the duties of rescuing the needy, assisting the deprived, and putting an end to the misery and suffering brought about by poverty and want.

But it is so difficult for us to take the initiative and to meet strife with peace—uncharitableness with charity, bitterness with sweetness. Our patience will be often taxed and over-taxed, and we shall meet with many failures, but let us remember that if we are to wield a good influence in the world, this is part of the discipline which we must undergo.

For charity is nothing without faith, neither is faith anything without charity, nor charity & faith without works; but in the works they are something & a something of the same nature as the use of the works. It is the same with affection, thought & operation. And it is the same with the will, the understanding & action; for the will without the understanding is like the eye without sight; & both without action are as a mind without a body.

"As a man thinks in his heart so is he," is a very true saying. Not by giving to the poor, by works of charity and righteousness the outward make up of a good man or woman—shall we be judged—and saved—and are ever being judged now, **but by the thought which prompted the action**; for this thought-life is the spiritual power which moulds first the spirit form and then the material, the body, into the harmonious expression of itself. St. Paul said: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and have not charity (love) it profits me nothing." The motive power, the thought-life, must be pure. And a spiritual blessing follows all that is done from a pure motive. Give grudgingly, and that negative spirit force follows the gift. Give generously, with a heart full of pure sympathy and love, and a blessing follows equally the giver and the gift.

That which we call our sacred thought Speeds to the earth's remotest spot, And leaves its blessing, or its woes, Like tracts behind it, as it goes. And after you have quite forgot, Or all outgrown some vanished thought, Back to your mind to make its home A dove or raven it will come.

If we live for the outward things of life we live for the material and finite, and so become slaves to our worldly possessions and circumstances. But living by the spirit gives us communion with God, the giver of every good gift, and no good thing will He withhold from them that love Him.

There are those who give little of the much which they have and they give it for recognition and their hidden desire **makes their gifts unwholesome**.

The shortest way to the Throne of God is across the valley of individual charity, through love of our neighbors & forgiveness of those that trespass against us. Live in peace with those who are around us.

Have you ever observed how invariably your "last dollar" is restored to you, with additions, when you have given it for some worthy purpose?

Quran 2:271. If you do deeds of charity openly, it is well; but if you bestow it upon the needy in secret, it will be even better for you, and it will atone for some of your bad deeds. And God is aware of all that you do.

Even if the purpose did not prove to be a worthy one, yet if you thought it so, and gave your last dollar with spontaneous sympathy and good will, you were not long left penniless.

Money is much like a man. If you do not hold it too jealously it returns to you the more readily. Never hesitate to give aid where you feel there is sore and pressing need, for fear you will be left in want yourself. **You will not be**. This does not mean that indiscriminate

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