EDUCATIONAL FUNCTION OF CHARITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE HOLY QURAN'S AYAT AND NARRATIVES

(Recibido el 04-07-2017. Aprobado el 05-09-2017)

Reza Zare’ei Samangan
Golestan University of Medical Sciences, social management and development research center, Assistant professor, Islamic teaching department, Gorgan, Iran.

Hussein Zare’ei Samangan
Religions university, MA student, jurisprudential religions, Qom branch, Qom, Iran.

Abstract. Charity that literally conveys the idea of donating properties or anything of value for the sole sake of the God to the poor and the other needful individuals is recounted in the Holy Quran as a characteristic of believer Muslims and also as a supplement to the faith with such a rank as high as fundamental beliefs and such deeds as saying prayers. The original objective of canonization of charity has been the rearing of pious individuals so charity can be investigated as an important pillar of human upbringing. The current research paper is a descriptive study that makes use of library research to document the related interpretations and texts signifying the validity of charity’s educational function. The result of this investigation has been the achievement of following educational affairs: revitalization of sense of duty, accountability, fostering and perfection of positive attitudes in the human beings, futurism, moderation, respecting the human veneration, liberation from associations and attachments and opportunism as well as so many others.

Keywords: charity, education, veneration, liberation, opportunity, responsibility

1. INTRODUCTION

Islam’s rituals and orders encompass such issues as individual and social affairs and intend to lead one to a felicitous life in the hereafter. These orders and rites are canonized moderately and free of any prodigality and meagerness. Quite the same way that the almighty God has embedded, in the genesis system, some effects derived of the creation instruments featuring an original and intrinsic nature for the objects and some others featuring being symptoms and side effects hence ancillary, He has granted the human beings’ voluntary deeds the same characteristics in the canonical system, meaning that some of the effects derived of the canonical orders are considered as intrinsic hence original and some others are regarded as side effects hence ancillary. Charity as one of the strongly recommended social orders in the sacred religion of Islam is understood, through scrutiny in the AYAT and Narratives, as featuring original spiritual and educational effects that have robust relationship with the human beings’ correction and upbringing. It is also found to have certain side effects that are subordinate such as helping the poor to enjoy life and filling the gaps of material vacuums in the society.

Such a truth is understandable from the considerations of AYAT like AYA 16 (SURAH TAQABUN), AYA 92 (SURAH: AI-E-IMRAN) and AYA 272 (SURAH BAQARAH), especially AYAT 4-254 (SURAH BAQARAH) as well as other AYAT that have certain orders regarding charity. The term “sustenance” has been given a general meaning in religious texts and it incorporates all the apparent and internal blessings. Thus, His Highness Sho’ayb (peace be upon him) has described his prophecy, mission and guardianship as the best of the sustenance, meaning “and I was endowed with the best of the sustenance [SURAH HUD: 88]). So, because sustenance conveys a comprehensive meaning that includes all the scientific and practical perfections and positions as the manifestations of extensive divine blessings, thus, based thereupon, charity includes any sort of scientific and practical contribution. Thus, Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) in interpreting the AYA, meaning “and they donate from whatever the sustenance they are endowed” interprets scientific development as an example of “from whatever the sustenance they are endowed” and orders: “and they donate from whatever we have taught them” (Majlesi, 1982, v.2, p.17); moreover, Imam Hassan Asgari (peace be upon him), as well, introduces individuals’ properties, physical stamina and fame as the examples of “from whatever the sustenance they are endowed” that are given as donations by the charitable individuals (Ibid, 1982, v.93, p.168).

The intention of the honorable AYA, meaning “rather their hands are spread out and he donates the way he pleases” (MA’IDA: 64) also brings testimony to the idea that divine charity embraces all the material and spiritual blessings and it is not limited to physical properties rather it includes knowledge, wisdom, power, position and life. That is because all these are cases of divine sustenance that the God has endowed to His servants. Thus it is ordered “from whatever the sustenance they are endowed” to convey a sort of generality and it has not been ordered “from their properties”. It is clear that the majority of these instances is nonmaterial and plays no role in reducing the material deprivations. These discussions confirm that the intrinsic and original philosophy behind the canonization of charity is humans’ steerage and fostering.

Inter alia the Holy Quran’s AYAT, the surface structure of the honorable AYA, meaning “and whatever good you spend is for yourselves” (BAQARAH: 272) is more explicitly reflective of the Holy Quran’s educational approach towards charity than to the distribution of wealth because charity has been concealed in “spending good” that incorporates a constellation of divine blessings including material and spiritual. And, secondly, it is asserted that the positive effect of charity is redirected towards the donator than towards the one receiving the donation; thirdly, donation of a certain property apparently causes deficit in the property that is not complying with the use of the letter in, implying getting benefit from something, thus if we consider the benefit as received in the form of steerage of the donator it will be more consistent than regarding it as compensating the financial deprivations and reducing the social classes’ gap. Therefore, pious and virtuous individuals not only allow the others share in their properties rather they allow them to enjoy a share of their knowledge and the other expertise they have; they do not even stint from donating fame to others and take advantage of their social status to satisfy the needs of their fellow humans and brothers because in the ideology of a Muslim all
these blessings are trusted in him by the God and he knows himself as the successor of the God based on the honorable AYA, meaning “donate from whatever you are made the successors [of the God] in it” (HADID: 7) and knows the correct way of using the God’s gifts is in reaching to spiritual perfection. All these issues signify that the main issue in charity before being meeting the others’ financial needs pertains to the spiritual and educational discussions of the donator. Based thereon, the present study investigates the educational effects and functions of the charity on the donator with an emphasis on the Holy Quran’s AYAT and Narratives.

1.1 Sense of Duty

The Human beings, for its enjoyment of intellect and free will, is the only creature that has responsibility and such a responsibility is very wide and extensive from the perspective of Islam. Besides being responsible for himself and his family, that can be proved by certain AYAT like, meaning “O’, you who have believed protect yourselves and your family from the fire” (Al-Tahrir: 6) and also by the AYA, meaning “you are responsible for yourselves” (Ma’ida: 53), the human beings are responsible in regard of the following affairs:

1.1.1 Subordinates

The great Islam Apostle (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) has ordered that “you are all managers and guards responsible for your subordinates, so commanders and Imams are responsible for their peasants; men are the caretakers of the family and they are responsible for them; women are the protectors of the houses, husbands and children and are responsible for them; the maids should guard and are responsible for the properties of their lords; beware that you are responsible for your peasants and subordinates because humans are responsible and have responsibilities for the entire creatures” (Ibn Abi Jumhur Ehsa’ee, 1982, v.1, p.364).

1.1.2 Environment

His Highness Imam Ali (peace be upon him) addresses the people and orders “seek divine piety in respect to the servants of the God and the cities because you are responsible before all of them, even for the lands and the animals” (NAHJ Al-Balaqa, sermon: 167).

1.1.3 The Society’s Underprivileged

Responsibility before the underprivileged of the society is considered so important by the Holy Quran that lack of adherence to it in social aspect, as ordered in the AYAT 17&18 of the SURAH FAJR, makes the human beings be inflicted with social ignominy and it, as ordered in the AYAT 2&3 of the SURAH MA’UN, brings about the grounding for the denial of the resurrection. Another point worthy of being mentioned here is that in these AYAT the humans are responsible to encourage the others, as well, to assist the underprivileged.

1.1.4 Responsibility for the Values

Encouragement of the Jihadists (Tawbeh: 95), reprimanding the runners from the frontlines of war (Ma’ida: 15) and rebuking the ones withdrawing from jihad (Tawbeh: 86-87 and 93) are all vivid interpretations of human beings’ responsibilities for preserving and defending values. The sacred religion of Islam makes use of various methods to revive the responsibility issue amongst the humans. Canonization of charity is a way to do so. This rule has been sometimes stipulated as an adequacy necessity quite similar to the provisions on financial Zakat and compulsory alimonies, for instance providing alimony to one’s permanent wife, children and parents in case of their needfulness as well as costs of defending the religion and the society and it is sometimes stipulated as a recommendation such as the costs of legitimate feasts and the costs of visiting the relatives that aims to institutionalize affection and kindness in the society as well as the cost of assisting the poor and the debtors and the captives all of which are pointed out by His Highness Imam Ali (peace be upon him) in the sermon 142 of NAHJ Al-Balaqa as stated in the following words: “he who is endowed a property by the God has to donate to his relatives and spread feast tables and free captives and also donate some to the needy and indebted individuals and seek patience in paying the divine rights so as to achieve divine meritoriousness.

The following two underlying issues can be understood in applying scrutiny in the above AYAT and pondering over the Narratives by the AHL-AL-BAYT:

- Humans are responsible to defend and promote the values and disperse love and kindness; and,
Humans are responsible before their own selves, their families, the underprivileged, and the indifferences of the society to the deprived individuals as well as the environment.

The least educational effect of these two issues is the revitalization of the sense of duty and revival of the accountability even to the non-Muslim deprived individuals. As it is narrated regarding the revelation instance of the AYA 272 of SURAH BAQARAH in “Majma’ Al-Bayan” by Ibn Al-Abbas, “the Muslims were not ready to donate charities to Non-Muslims so the honorable AYA was descended allowing the Muslims to perform it, when it is deemed necessary and the Muslims were deprived of the right to withdraw and avoid from donating charity to Non-Muslims for such purposes as making them convert to Islam” (Tabarsi, 1994, v.2, p.176). This AYA, as well of the other ones, are testimonies to the justification of the necessity for feeling responsibility before the other humans; donating charities is a way of satisfying such a sense of duty and objectification of the humans’ accountabilities in respect to one another.

1.2 Fostering and Perfecting the Positive Attitudes:

Based on his nature of creation, humans are a concoction of paradoxical attitudes. The humans’ attitudes are classified to three sets based on the AYAT and Narratives:

- A set of the actions and emotions are not intrinsically of a positive or negative value and they become either positive or negative according to the orientations and their subjects like fear, anger, love, happiness and hatred.

- Another set of the actions and emotions are intrinsically negative and anti-value and acting based on them provides for rebuke and scorn of the doer such as avarice, having temptations in respect to one’s own self, extremist tendency to accumulation of wealth that will be followed by jealousy.

- The third set encompasses the excellent human attitudes and tendencies such as inclination towards eternity, benevolence, virtuousness, perfection and so forth (Daylami and Zanjani, 1999, p.258).

Each of these attitudes can be corroborated or weakened via education and as a result of humans’ performance. When an attitude is strengthened, its indicator shows an upward ascension and the opposite tendencies’ indicators go down. Therefore, the holy Quran and the narratives, considering the plurality of the positive and negative attitudes, presents numerous solutions to the fortification of the positive attitudes so as to make the negative attitudes suffer a decrease or be totally extinguished with the practicing and strengthening of the positive ones. One of the solutions offered in the Holy Quran parallel to the corroboration of such positive attitudes as forgiveness, devotedness and altruism is an order for donating charity from the absolute divine gifts and blessings (BAQARAH: 272). The AYA 265 of the SURAH BAQARAH, as well, that orders “and the example of those who donate their properties for the sake of God’s satisfaction and stabilization [of the excellent human virtues] in their souls is like a garden that is located on a high ground and its fruits will be doubled even if it is severely and consecutively rained with gross droplets” illustrates the fruit of donating charity in the attainment of the God’s satisfaction and stabilization of the excellent human virtues. AYA 261 of the SURAH BAQARAH is more eloquent in that it orders “the ones who donate their charity for the sake of the God are like seeds that grow seven clusters each bearing a hundred grains and the God will duplicate or multiply it for those [who deserve] He pleases and the God is [in terms of power and mercy] large and knows everything.

In the abovementioned AYA, the donator of charity has been resembled to a highly blessed seed that is sown in an auspicious ground, whereas, naturally it is the act of donation that had to have been resembled. Such a choice of word is expressive of the truth that the acts of every human being is overshadowed by his or her existence and the more an action is expanded then the more the human’s being is developed because according to the axiom of simile the prerequisite of which besides the vehicle of simile is the necessity for the existence of two similar things that are resembled based on a common feature, it has to be mentioned that here the common feature between the person donating charity and wheat is the growth and development that is indicative of the fact that the donator of charity will find remarkable spiritual and social growth in the light of his or her deed in such a manner that there will be remained no room for negative attitudes inside him or her.

The effect of donating charity on the purification of the psyche and fostering of the positive attitudes and dismissal of the negative attitudes is highlighted in the AYA 103 of the SURAH TAQBEH that orders “take alms from their
properties and pure and cleanse them” as well as more explicitly in the AYA 16 of the SURAH TAQABUN that describes donation as a factor deterring being breath-taken that is jealousy accompanied by greed.

1.3 Futurism

One of the incontrovertible teachings of the Holy Quran is the human beings’ eternity and persistence. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) orders that “you are created to be eternal not to be destroyed” (Amedi, 1987, p.2291). For the same reason, a recommendation to the human being frequently emphasized in the Holy Quran is paying attention to the future and accumulating a capital for the future life. From the holy Quran’s viewpoint, charity is a capital for that life (BAQARAH: 25).

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) has also underlined the future-making role of the charity and orders “donate from whatever expendable so as to attain the viable” (Al-Laysi Al-Waseti, 1997, p.221). It is also ordered elsewhere by His Highness that “nobody would have a share of this world unless to the extent s/he donates for the otherworld; you are needier to donating what you have earned than obtaining what you are seeking to attain” (Amedi, 1987, p.8572).

His Highness orders Imam Hassan (peace be upon him) that “[O’ my son] keep properties for you to the extent you need and send the excess thereof for the hereafter [the otherworld] beforehand. In fact, your share of the world is the extent by which you build your life in the otherworld so donate on the path of God and do not be the treasury holder of the others” (NAHJ AL-BALAQA, letter: 31).

1.4 Liberation from Association

The humans in their path towards perfection encounter numerous factors of avverting shackles that prevent them from moving in the direction towards the vicinity of the God and deprive them from their freedom, such a human that, as ordered by His Highness Amir Al-Mu’emmen, has been created free and should not be the servant of anything else but the God (NAHJ AL-BALAQA, letter: 31). Unfortunately, mankind’s intense attachment to his belongings, especially attachment to the world, has made a slave out of him, shackled him and held him captive. This world is considered as the otherworld farm in Islam’s ideology but it has turned for some to an objective in lieu of being means as a result of intense desire and strong attachment thereto. This world that has to be used as a tool for achieving perfection and spiritual move is changed to a means of halt and captivity. The humans in their re-conquering of their freedom have no way but to detach themselves from such corporeal associations and attachments. Donating charity is the best way for reaching to such freedom and saving oneself from attachment and that donation should not be just any rather it has to be in the form of donating the best and the most beloved because the more the feeling of love for a thing the more the individual becomes attached thereto, thus it is ordered in the Holy Quran that meaning “you will never achieve good deed unless you donate from what you love” (Al-E-IMRAN: 92).

Surely, the example case of “more perfect and more complete” is manifested in humans’ freedom from attachment and association; therefore, as it is posited in the Holy Quran, the believers easily donate charity from their properties while they are beloved and “they donate properties even they are loved”. This sea is along the stretch of freedom from association and attachment or as a result of disassociation then it is why the God in line with inviting to donate the most beloved things in the AYA 267 of the SURAH BAQARAH, orders “to donate charity, do not spend the most valueless of the properties while you yourselves are not willing to accept them from the others, so surely this order has been issued to indicate that donating valueless things has not only devoid of any role in human’s freedom of association but it also might be another contributing factor to the imprisonment of the human soul in the sludge of egoism and selfishness for the insolence to the needy individuals it has concealed therein.

This has also been the practical way of conduct for the AHL AL-BAYT who always donated the best. Mo’ammal Bin Khalil states that “whenever Imam Reza (peace be upon him) was brought a dish of food to eat, His Highness would pick up best of it and put it in another dish and ordered to be given to the poor” and recited the AYA”, meaning “But, he has not broken through the difficult pass” (AL-BALAD: 11) and ordered that the God knows that not all humans can afford freeing a slave so He provided this way, charity, for the others to reach to the paradise” (Atarodi, 1985, v.1, p.38). Donating the wedding gown on the night of Her Highness Zahra’s wedding to a poor person and considering the AYA, meaning “you will never achieve good deed unless you donate from what you love” (Al-e-IMRAN: 92) can be interpreted as conveying the idea of detachment from the corporeal desires (Ghazvini, 1996, p.164) because no single human being can achieve freedom, as the
highest example of benevolence, when being attached and associated to the worldly matters.

1.5. Opportunism

The opportunities are not always at hand and constantly repeating rather they are like breezes that blow every now and then and they are lost in a glimpse of an eye and one has to wait an unknown period of time for another to blow. His Highness Amir (peace be upon him) orders that “opportunities are fast moving and late coming” (Al-Leisi Al-Waseti, 1997, p.10812). This is why those who know the value of the opportunities seize them on-time and perform their duties and the God admires them; however, in the AYA 10 of the SURAH HADID does not equal the value of the charity donated by Muslims before the conquering of Mecca and the value of the charity that was endowed after the conquering of Mecca rather the value of the deeds of those who acted opportunistically and made themselves aligned with the path of God on time and donated charity to support it and performed Jihad prevails the ones who conducted the same act on an occasion other than the time when opportunity had showed up. The AYA orders meaning “those of you who donated charity and upheld jihad before the conquering of Mecca are not equal to the ones who did the same thereafter, they are higher in rank to those who later on donated charity and conducted jihad and the God has promised everyone good ending and the God knows well about what you do” (AL-HADID: 10).

Thus an individual who finds a gate of benevolence opened before him should, as ordered by the great apostle of Islam (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards), seize it because it is not clear how long will it stay open (Ibn Abi Jumhur Ehsa’ee, 1982, v.1, p.146).

1.6 Fostering Monotheism in Ownership:

From the perspective of the AYAT in the Holy Quran, human beings hold two sets of logic in regard of their belongings: one is the logic by the divine humans who know everything as belonging to the God and like His Highness Solomon, the prophet (peace be upon him), consider them as the God’s grace and say “this is a grace of my God” (AL-NAHL: 40) and the other is the logic of the human beings like Korah who consider their possessions as being earned via their own abilities and say “verily, I was given that for the knowledge I own”, meaning “I own” (QASAS: 78).

In AYAT like, meaning “donate charities from whatever sustenance I have endowed to you” (BAQARAH: 254) and meaning “and they donate from whatever sustenance I have endowed to them” (BAQARAH: 3), the God, meanwhile announcing donation of charities as a divine order, provides the humans with this monotheistic insight that they have to consider what they donate, for its nominative source, a sustenance given by the God not a possession of their own and if someone say I have gathered my belongings by my own efforts then he is to be said infatuated with self-proprietorship illusion because he, as well, knew his knowledge and effort as factors given rise to the gathering of such a huge wealth by him and he used to say, meaning “verily, I was given that for my own knowledge” (QASAS: 78); whereas, the truth is quite opposite, because if such efforts, whether knowingly or unknowingly, could be considered as the reason behind a person’s affluence then such a result has to be holding everywhere while there are many who make great efforts but they end in nowhere. So, if a person succeeded to gather some wealth and wished to donate part of it, s/he should not consider himself or herself as the real owner of the wealth rather s/he should know that s/he is a representative of a real owner, the God and should donate charities based on his orders as mentioned in the following AYAT: meaning “and whatever the gift you possess belongs to the God” (AL-NAHL: 53); and, meaning “bestow them with the property of the God that has been given to you” (AL-NOOR:33) as well as, meaning “and donate charity out of that in which He has made you successors” (AL-HADID:7) (see also, Javadi Amoli, 2008, 2nd ed., v.2, p.168 and v.10, p.526).

1.7 Enjoyment of the Best Guidance of the Holy Quran:

The message of the AYA meaning “verily, this Quran guides to that which is the most suitable” (AL-ISRA’A:9) is that the main objective of the Holy Quran’s revelation is guiding the mankind towards the most direct and the most robust path that has shouldered such an important duty in two areas of creation and canonization. Canonical guidance includes the offering of ways that all humans enjoy them equally but the genetic guidance means unification with the beloved and it is second in rank to the canonical guidance based on the honorable AYA, meaning “that is the book in which there is no doubt for the pious ones” which specifically belongs to the pious individuals. The God enumerates special characteristics for these pious individuals. Each of these
characteristics is reflective of a branch and division of divine piety; the expression, meaning “those who believe in the unseen” shoulders the religious virtuousness agency though it is per se a backup to the other types of piety, as well, and the expression, meaning “and they uphold prayers” is a sign of worshipping piety and the expression meaning “they donate from whatever the sustenance they are endowed” is elucidative of the financial and nonfinancial piety. The mentioning of these specific characteristics means that as the Holy Quran’s guidance is graded differently only the ones who are qualified for the entire ranks of the piety can enjoy the entire ranks of the Holy Quran’s guidance and because there is no direct and explicit reference is made to the piousness qualifications in the AYA of concern then it has to be taken as a sign implying generality. So, the title “pious” should be considered as meaning staying clean of the entire sins and vices. Thus, he who wishes to enjoy the most superior guidance of the Holy Quran should, as one way, be financially pious and donating charity is a distinct example of the financial piety.

1.8 Tendency towards Permissible Things

One of the teachings, highly emphasized in the Holy Quran and Narratives, is adherence to the canonical forbiddance and legitimacy of the things because he who wants to reach to the proximity of the God via donating charity should ornament his deeds with the subjective goodness, i.e. believing in divine teachings, and the goodness of his deeds, i.e. practical unification with the God. In the divine AYAT, these two are interpreted as faith and good deed that are the major conditions allowing for the attainment of felicity. Thus, the believers should spend charities from permissible and canonically legitimate things if they wish their donations to be qualified for the goodness of deeds in addition to the subjective goodness. That is because the God has ordered the believers to donate from the sustenance endowed by the God, meaning “donate charity from whatever the sustenance we have endowed you”, since the illegitimate things are not considered canonically as being “the God’s sustenance”; contrarily, they deserve the wrath of the God, so a thing worthy of the God’s anger is by no means an instrument to achieve the God’s satisfaction.

1.9 Liberation from Love for Personal Possessions:

Life in this world demands its requirements one of which is the existence of personal possessions. Thus, the God has made part of the possessions actual and another part potential. The human beings are given the power to make use and also acquire personal possessions and the love for personal possession is naturally devised inside the humans and the humans are born intrinsically with a love for belongings so as to tolerate the pain and the difficulties of doing tasks to earn a living; such a desire, like other ones, when exceed its moderation threshold and becomes excessive and, as ordered in the Holy Quran, reaches to an intensified love, meaning “they feel love for the personal belongings with such a huge affection” (Fajr: 20) will be turned into an internal dangerous foe that has hid inside the humans’ bodies and “meaning “and present in [human] souls is stinginess” (AL-NISA’A: 128). It is at such a time that the only solution is donation for the sole sake of the God. Thus, the God in the AYA 195 of the SURAH BAQARAH equals lack of donating charity to perishing and in the AYA 8 of the SURAH MUNAFIQUN the lack of donating charity has been introduced as being the cause of otherworld’s regrets and remorsefulness that will bear no result.

1.10 Practicing the Spirit of Magnanimity

Based on AYA 70 of the SURAH ISRA’A, Islam introduces humans as creatures worthy of veneration and tries preserving such a reverence through various methods. Thus, it not only prohibits people from going under the burden of others’ stoop and loving the affluent people for their wealth (Majlesi, 1982, v.75, p.56) but it also reminds that they should be seen as ordinary people because the scale of magnanimity and veneration is piety and ethical virtues not the wealth and the worldly shines and glitters. Such a conduct brings about the grounding for the strengthening of the spirit of magnanimity and augmentation of human veneration as a capital. And, in case urgencies arise, it is ordered that your fame and dignity are like ice that smelters by begging and requesting the others so beware before whom you are making it liquid” (Al-Leisi Al-Waseti, 1997, p.8197).

Simultaneously, the human beings are recommended to have a generous hand not a taker one because a donating hand is the most superior of them and I safeguards the humans’ magnanimity and veneration (Majlesi, 1982, v.74, p.149; see also, Javadi Amoli, 1999, 2nd ed., v.10, p.530). This same issue makes the faithful humans, in case of their enjoyment of the absolute divine blessings, readily donate even their lives and in case of needs
they live a noble life in such a manner that the ones having no news of their whereabouts consider them as rich and wealthy individuals (BAQARAH).

1.11 Respecting the Individuals’ Veneration

Respecting the humans’ veneration and personality is one of the incontrovertible emphases of the Holy Quran’s AYAT and the behavioral and discourse conducts of the great apostle of Islam and the immaculate Imams. The forbiddance of suspiciousness, the forbiddance of backbiting and many of the other ethical orders in social area point to the respect that should be paid to the human veneration. One educational point that can be learnt from donating charity is paying attention to the humans’ veneration. Thus, the Holy Quran in the AYA 262 of SURAH BAQARAH only gives value to the donations that are no cause of stooping others and are given without any sort of annoying the others and in the AYA 264 of the SURAH BAQARAH charity accompanied by annoying and reminding others is enumerated as an invalid deed.

In this regard, the great apostle of Islam (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) has ordered that “he who grants a faithful individual with a good of a sort, then annoys him by making him go through a difficult situation or reminds him of the good he has done he has surely invalidated his good deed” (Majlesi, 1982, v.13, p.334).

The point worthy of note in this order is that the Holy Quran, in fact, does not consider the humans’ capital of life limited to the material and financial ones rather psychological and social capitals as well as the human veneration have also been taken into account, so he who donates something to another and reminds him or makes him heartbroken via his irritations has not given anything to him because if the donator has given one sort of capital to him he has, as well, deprived him of another capital and the negative effects of humiliations and the psychological irritations may even exceed the positive effects of what has been donated.

Therefore, it will be completely natural and fair, if such individuals are given no reward and otherworldly prize or, better said, such individuals are in the majority of cases indebted not creditors because humans’ fame is a lot more superior and loftier than wealth and properties (Makarem Shirazi et al, 2007, v.2, p.373).

It is in line with the preservation of humans’ veneration that it is stated in a HADITH that do not interrupt a poor person when he is begging something from you and let him explain all he wants. Then treat him nobly and politely and mildly and grant him what he has asked you or reply him negatively in pure courtesy (Majlesi, 1982, v.13, p.254).

The order for donating charity from qualified personal properties in the , meaning “O’, you who have believed donate from the clean part of the properties you have gathered and from whatever we have made the ground grow out; do not go to the unclean parts for donating charity while you yourself are not ready to accept them unless in reluctance and ignorance and know that the God is needless and worthy to be praised” (BAQARAH:267), is parallel to the veneration of the individuals. Therefore, because the donator himself does not accept inappropriate donations of charities from the others or accepts them in reluctance or ignorance, so it is better to grant the poor with qualified and clean things because the existence of affections and feelings is what all humans, poor and wealthy, share.

The honorable AYA 92 of Al-E-IMRAN orders “you will never get to the truth of benevolence and righteousness unless you donate from whatever you love most” is in fact a confirmation of the same issue. The humans’ veneration and fame, in regard of donating charity, is of so much significance that Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) orders that “doing good and beneficence should be carried out before requests are made otherwise if you grant someone with something you have, in fact, paid the value of a person’s dignity, meaning that you have entered a transaction the requester has asked you to provide him a part of your personal possessions, material or spiritual, at the cost of his dignity and fame”.

1.12 Moderation

Moderation as one of the positive features of the mankind is highly encouraged and recommended in Islam. Therefore, one of the things that Islam has repeatedly asked the Muslim is avoiding any sort of prodigality and meagerness in such a manner that His Highness Amir Al-Mu’menin Ali (Peace be Upon him) characterizes the ones who have gone astray of the path of moderation and have found inclinations towards left or right and orders “ignorant people are not seen but at states of prodigality and meagerness” (Majlesi, 1982, v.1, p.159).

In the sermon 6 of NAHJ AL-BALAQA, leftists and rightists are introduced as deviated from the right path and moderation has been delineated as the road to survival. This is why the Holy Quran orders for the observation of even valued and
normative affairs like donating charity and consider it the trait of the servants of the God, the most merciful. The following statement is a description of such individuals:

“They are the ones who exercise neither prodigality nor meagerness in their donations of charity rather adhere to moderation”. In order not to go to extremism in donating charity, the God orders “donate charity from whatever the sustenance we have endowed you” (BAQARAH: 262). Thus it is ordered, meaning “from whatever the sustenance we have endowed you” not, meaning “whatever the sustenance we have endowed you”. The great Apostle of Islam (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards), as well, based on the AYA 29 of the SURAH ISRA’ that orders “neither tie up your hands to your neck and be hand-folded nor be so open-handed to donate all your belongings and become forced to seek seclusion”, urges the human beings to observe such a moderation and avoid prodigality and meagerness.

It is based on the same divine orders that the great apostle of Islam (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny with the best of His regards) orders “no donation is dearer to the God than moderate charity and the God abhors prodigality in going to extremes in donating charity and likes the ones who donate economically” (Horr Ameli, 1965, v.8, p.305).

2. CONCLUSION

The results that we are taught from the AYAT like, meaning “if you did good you have done it to your own selves”, is that the fruit of every positive deed is originally and in the first place returns to the doer of the good deed and if it is considered as having an effect for the other it is secondary and subsequent. Charity as a positive social deed is greatly emphasized in the sacred religion of Islam and it follows the same general axiom. Thus, it is the donator of the charity that is firstly picking up the fruit thereof, though the needy individuals of the society, including the material and the spiritual poor, enjoy the fruits thereof in a second place and alongside with it. Secondly, the original fruits of charity are more of a spiritual and educational nature assisting the donator to become disciplined with no such a thing as direct reward being specified for donating charity. That is because in this case the AYAT on donating charity would instigate the individuals to gather personal possessions and urge them having intense yearning for piling up worldly belongings and, resultantly, the humans would get used to donating charity with the greed of acquiring more properties not for such intentions as practicing devotion and exercising self-sacrifice. Such a donation is for sure donating properties for acquiring more worldly belongings that is per se a prelude to a more severe pain hence not a cure.

So, the main pivot in canonization of donating charity is disciplining individuals and securing oneself an otherworldly reward not a corporeal and earthy reward and not even filling the social gap and removing poverty from the society, although these same effects can be secondarily obtained from donating charity.

In this regard, Amir Al-Mu’menin Ali (peace be upon him) orders that “preserve [not increase] your faith by alms (donation of charity) and your personal possessions by paying Zakat” (NAHJ AL-BALAGHA, Motto: 146).

REFERENCES


