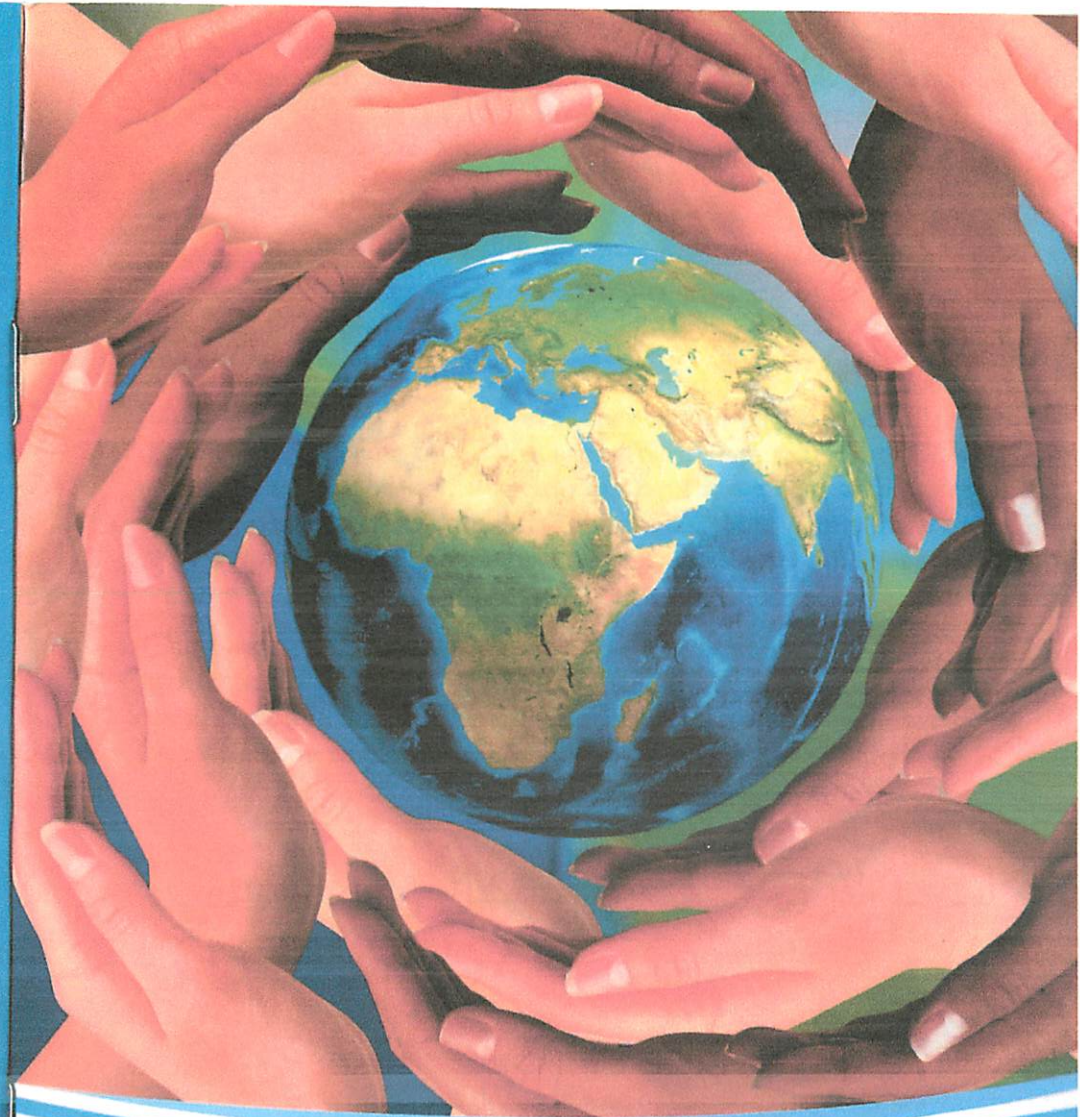


“ You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

Mahatma Gandhi
Lawyer



SERVING HUMANITY

By Fiaz Hozainh Bhalloo

AN ISLAM VIEW ON SERVING HUMANITY

Islam is a religion that emphasizes on helping others within the society. We will try and understand the concept of serving humanity from the Qur'an (The Holy book of Islam) and the Ahlulbayt (Prophet Muhammad and his purified progeny). The sole reason why many Muslims have been lead astray is due to the fact that some have held on to the Qur'an while they have ignored the Ahlulbayt (The purified progeny of Prophet Muhammad). However, Other Muslims have held on to the Ahlulbayt but they have forsaken the Qur'an.

The Holy Prophet of Islam said "I am leaving behind me two weighty things and so long as you hold them both, you will never be led astray. They are the Qur'an and my Ahlulbayt (Household who are designated by God to guide mankind)"

(Sahih Muslim Book 31, hadith 5920)

Therefore, let us see what the Qur'an and the Ahlulbayt have to say about serving mankind. Abdullah bin Masud (A famous companion of the prophet) reports that once, after the isha salat (the night prayers), a man from among the prayers stood up and said: "I am very poor. I am hungry." The Holy Prophet said: "Who among you will give food to this man?" Ali (The son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad) stood up and took the poor man to his home. There was food in the house, but barely enough for one man which was kept for him. Ali put out the lamp and gave it to Fatimah asking her to bring it back when the guest had eaten the food. It was done so that the guest might not feel discomforted and uneasy. Ali sat with him and acted as if he too was eating but in reality Ali was pretending to eat.

The next day, the Holy Prophet went towards Imam Ali and said: "O Ali! Because of your generosity, God has revealed a verse in honour of you". The verse is found in the 59th surah of the Holy Qur'an:

وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ ۚ
وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

"And they prefer others above themselves although poverty was their (own problem). In fact those who are saved from the greediness of hearts, are the ones who will achieve true success". (Hashr 59:9)

(Source: Agha Pooya Yazdi's tafsir)

This verse tells us that even though we may not be the richest people in the world, yet we need to serve humanity. Helping other human beings is an obligation upon every single muslim.

The house of Ahl ul Bayt always put their trust wholly in Allah under all circumstances and gave whatever they had in the way of Allah. Once a group of men came to Ali and said: "We always rely upon Allah. We eat when we have food, and if we do not have it we bear with patience." Ali said: "Real dependence on Allah is to thank Him when there is nothing with you, and when you have anything to give it to others who are more in need of it than you."

The Qur'an also tells us not to waste our money on needless things. It would be rather beneficial to serve mankind with that money. Of course, we all have a right to live a life of comfort. A luxurious life is not forbidden but we also need to remember our duties and responsibilities:

وَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ ۖ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ
وَلَا تُبْذِرْ تَبْذِيرًا

Give to the near of kin his due, and also to the needy and the wayfarers. Do not squander your wealth wastefully; for those who squander wastefully are Satan's brothers, and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord. (Surah Israa 17:26 - 27)

In reality, when you don't help others, you are not harming them (the poor) but you are harming your own soul. Remember, the money that you have is not yours but it is your lord's. Open the chapter that is named after the Holy Prophet of Islam and see what the glorious lord of the heavens has to say on those who are selfish and stingy:

هَٰ أَنتُمْ هَٰؤُلَاءِ تُدْعَوْنَ لِتُنفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَمِنْكُمْ
 مَنْ يَبْخُلُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَبْخُلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخُلُ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ ۗ وَإِنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا
 غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَكُمْ

Look, you are being called upon to spend in Allah's Way, yet some of you are being niggardly(stingy), whereas the one who is niggardly is, in fact, being niggardly only to himself. Allah is Self-Sufficient: it is you who are the needy. If you turn away, Allah will replace you by another people, and they will not be like you. (Surah Muhammad 47:38)

A human being can never call himself good unless he develops the nature of generosity. This is in accordance with the verse of the Qur'an in chapter 3 verse 92, we are told, "You shall not attain righteousness until you spend out of what you love. Verily God knows whatever you spend".

Abu Qatadah related that the Prophet said: "If anyone would like Allah to save him from the hardships of the Day of Resurrection, he should give more time to his debtor who is short of money, or remit his debt altogether." (Sahih Muslim)

There is no problem if one gives alms openly to set an example for others to follow suit. Extra and hidden giving in compliance with the Holy Prophet's advice "one hand knows not what the other gives", is more noble because it protects from the danger of vanity. Allah is aware of the intentions and the motives of the givers. He gives in return an appropriate recompense in both the cases.

Imam Jafar bin Muhammad al Sadiq (The grandson of the Holy Prophet of Islam) says: "Hidden charity appeases the wrath of Allah, does away with his sins as the water puts out the fire, and keeps away several misfortunes."

The Holy Prophet has said: "Seven persons shall be allowed to take refuge with Allah when there will be no other refuge.

1. He who rules justly and judges impartially.
2. He who grows up in a virtuous family as an embodiment of virtue.
3. He who remains attached with the place of worship of Allah, and loves and helps the worshippers.
4. He who loves people, and hates the evildoers in order to promote the cause of Allah.
5. He who says: "I fear the Lord" whenever a beautiful woman incites him to do that which is forbidden.
6. He who gives charity in secret by one hand, not letting the other know it.
7. He who prays in secret and sheds tears in remembrance of God."

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: "A generous young man who is plunging in sins is better, in the sight of Allah, to a stingy old man who plunges in worship."

(Ref:Quoted from al-Wafi; part 6 page 68 (quoted from al-Kafi and al-Faqih))

The saying above tells us not to be judgemental about other human beings. There are many Muslims in the world who all they do is worship God and think that their worship will grant them salvation. This is absolutely wrong as the saying above illustrates the fact that without serving humanity, one may never embark the ark of salvation.

A society cannot have tranquillity unless its individuals feel the spirit of mutual sympathy and harmonize with each other in feelings and senses. Mutual sympathy has a bright picture that shines with beauty and brilliance. Undoubtedly, the noblest, most beautiful, and most everlasting picture of mutual sympathy is the feelings of the wealthy individuals for the poor. Such feelings will surely ease the pains of poverty.

By the application of this noble humane principal, (namely, the principals of mutual sympathy) the poor will bear the feelings of amicability towards the wealthy, and this will help the community live happily.

From this cause, the Islamic Sharia(jurisprudence) has called for open handedness and sympathy with the poor, and condemned the societies whose individuals suffer starvation and deprivation without finding

anyone who extends the hand of help towards them. It has also regarded the wealthy who do not help the poor as being very far-off Islam.

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s) has reported: A man passed by `Uthman ibn `Affan who was sitting in the mosque asking for money. `Uthman ordered five Dirhams to be given to him. The man said to `Uthman, "Guide me to one who can relieve my pain." `Uthman asked him to go to those generous youths, indicating with his hand a place in the mosque where Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn and `Abdullah ibn Ja`far were sitting. The man saluted them and asked for money. "Begging is not permissible save for three cases; blood money with compassion; debt with a broken heart and poverty which is intolerable. Which is your case?" The man said, "I am afflicted with one of them." Imam Hasan ordered fifty Dinars to be given to him. Imam Husayn too ordered forty nine Dinars to be given to him, and `Abdullah ibn Ja`far too ordered forty eight Dinars to be given to him.

After having received these Dinars, the man passed by `Uthman once again. `Uthman asked, "What did you do?" The man said, "I passed by you asking for money. You helped me only with five Dinars and did not ask me any question either; but that generous young man having thick hair asked me something while giving me fifty Dinars. The second one gave me forty nine Dinars and the third forty eight Dinars." `Uthman said, "Who can relieve your pain like these generous young men? They have appropriated knowledge and insight for themselves and have gathered wisdom and benevolence in them."

(Ref:al-Khisal: 135/1, H 149.)

Ali ibn Abi Talib became the caliph of Islam and he took it upon himself to bring a reformation in the society. He considered Arabs and Non-Arabs to be equal and always gave them equal rights. Once a woman came towards Ali Ibn Abi Talib and said "O Ali! I am in a bad financial condition and I am in desperate need of your help".

Ali took some money from the treasury and gave it to the Arab woman. After a few days, the slave of this Arab woman came towards Ali and said "(O Ali! I need some financial help". Ali removed the same amount of money from the treasury as he had removed for the Arab woman.

The Arab woman came complaining towards Ali, stating the fact that the woman he helped was indeed her slave and further than that, she was a non-Arab. Ali picked up some clay on his right hand and some

on his left hand. He stated "Do you see any difference between these two sets of clay?". The Arab woman replied in the negative. Ali then said " The same way you cannot see the difference between these two sets of clay, I cannot see any difference between an Arab or a non-Arab due to the fact that both of them were created from clay".

Although Ali was the successor to the prophet, the fortress of Islam, and the Commander of the Faithful, he did not at all wish that the non-Muslims should be compelled to embrace Islam. According to him, the people were free to worship God as they liked and to hold the beliefs of their choice subject to the condition that they did not harm others. He allowed freedom of faith because all human beings are the slaves of God, and religion is a means of connection between Him and His creatures.

According to Ali, one's being a human being was sufficient for his being honoured, befriended and dealt with kindly as well as for his rights being immune from infringement by others.

Imam Ali said, "Know that people are of two types: they are either your brothers in religion or your equals in humanity." (*Nahjul Balagha*, Sermon #53)

He cared about the poor very much. His representative in Basra, Othman ibn Hunaif Al Ansari, was once invited to a feast by a rich person. When Imam Ali knew about the invitation, he sent a letter to his representative condemning this act [feasting with the rich while the poor have no place in that]. (*Nahjul Balagha*, Letter 45)

The Imam worked very hard to ensure that no person felt on the outside of the community. Even if the person was not a Muslim, the Imam wanted everyone to feel welcomed.

The Imam was once walking in the streets, and he passed by a Christian beggar. His question was, "What is this?" When they told him that he is an old Christian man who cannot work and is asking people for help, the Imam replied and said, "you [the Muslim community] used him [in his youth] and when he became old, you left him." Then the Imam assigned a salary for him from the treasury, the same way he did with Muslims. (*Wasa'il al-Shia*)

The question the Imam raised in the previous story sheds light on yet

another important aspect of his government. Note that the Imam did not ask about the identity of the beggar; rather, he asked about the situation. In other words, the Imam rendered begging as uncommon during his rule, and in fact it was. Imam Ali fought poverty and begging by providing the three most essential needs for humans, independent of who they were: shelter, water, and sustenance (usually in the form of jobs). Unemployment did not exist during the reign of Ali Ibn Abi Talib.

We are usually told that we need to be tolerant towards other religions. I don't like the word 'tolerance' because we usually tolerate something that we don't like. We should not be tolerant towards other religions but we should appreciate other religions. By appreciating other faiths, we will be able to have inter-faith and inter-cultural harmony within our societies.

The leader of the Ismaili sect, the Aga Khan has expressed the view of the religion of Islam as a thinking, spiritual faith: one that teaches compassion and mercy and that uplifts the honor of human beings, Allah's noblest and best creation.

The Aga Khan has built many schools and medical centers in the world. These institutions have benefited the lives of several people.

The jurist of the shi'a Ithna'asheri, Ayatullah Ali Sistani has always ensured that the citizens of Iraq are secure whether Muslim or Non Muslim. Due to his teachings, the mosque of Ali was opened for the Christians where they stayed and were taken care of. This protected the Christians from the brute and viciousness of Isis (A terrorist organization). In reality, these Christians were displaced and did not where to go. However, Najaf (A city of Iraq) decided to provide them with facilities.

Sawad al-Khoei, the foundation's director in Najaf, told Al-Monitor over the phone, "Christians are our homeland brothers, and our duty is to do all we can to protect them from extremists and terrorists. All of our cities and homes are open to receive them. There would be no religious limits or clampdown, had they wished to settle down in Najaf temporarily or permanently."

(Source:<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/08/christians-displaced-support-by-najaf.html#ixzz40dVMhMac>)

Islam did not care whether the person helped is a Muslim or a Non Muslim. Many Muslims have that misconception that only Muslims can be served. On the contrary, the title of this book removes that misconception as the

title is 'SERVING HUMANITY' and not 'Serving Muslims'.

In the end, we pray to God to bring forth his awaited saviour (The Mahdi) who will ultimately fill this earth with peace and justice. The Holy progeny of Prophet Muhammad have stated regarding the Mahdi that when he reappears, there wouldn't be a lack of wealth and nobody will be seen begging on the streets.

FACTS ABOUT POVERTY IN THE WORLD

According to the United Nations, 21,000 people die due to hunger every single day. That means that one person dies every four seconds. Unfortunately, it is children who die more often.

It is estimated that more than 400,000 street children exist in India. Mainly because of family conflict, they come to live on the streets and take on the full responsibilities of caring for themselves, including working to provide for and protecting themselves. Though street children do sometimes band together for greater security, they are often exploited by employers and the police.

(Ref:Chatterjee A , 'India : The forgotten children of the cities' 1992)

Life is extremely difficult for Afghanistan's street children. Many resort to working and hence miss out on their education. With education a distant dream, it is very difficult to believe that the 5,000 children in Herat city will break the shackles and relieve itself from poverty.

Each year, World Vision Afghanistan Street Children's Centre takes in 100 such children for medical, nutritional and psychological support. In short, the objective of this organization is to turn these children's lives around and get them into education that will dramatically improve their future.

"When the children first come here they have lots of health problems, cleanliness problems and psychological issues," explains Dr Rahima Rahim, the centre's medical expert. "Some of them suffer from deep depression. And some are quarrelsome and fight with each other.

THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN ISLAM

Prophet Muhammad was born into this world after his father had died, and he lost his mother when he was six and his grandfather when he was eight. For a long time he stayed under the protection of his paternal uncle Abu Talib. He grew up with his cousins and Abu Talib always loved Muhammad more than all his other children.

Muhammad always said that he was looked after and treated well. The verses: *“Did He not find thee an orphan and give thee shelter (and care)? ...”* are verses that refer to Abu Talib. Unfortunately, many Muslims around the world are brainwashed that Abu Talib was a Kafir (Disbeliever). In reality, there was no one who supported the Holy Prophet more than Abu Talib (Peace be upon him).

Abu Huraira narrated that al-Aqra' b. Habis saw Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him) kissing Hasan. Al Aqra' said: "I have ten children, but I have never kissed any one of them", whereupon Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: "He who does not show mercy (towards his children), no mercy would be shown to him."

(Ref : Sahih Muslim Book 30 Hadith 5736)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "He is not of us who does not have mercy on young children, nor honor the elderly"

(Al Tirmidhi)

Narrated by Jabir ibn Samurah : "I prayed along with Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) the first prayer. He then went to his family and I also went along with him when he met some children (on the way). He began to pat the cheeks of each one of them. He also patted my cheek and I experienced a coolness or a fragrance of his hand as if it had been brought out from the scent bag of a perfumer."

(Ref:Sahih Muslim)

The Ahlulbayt news agency reported On the 9th of November, 2015 :

Hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugee children of school age are not provided with education in Turkey.

According to data released by Human Rights Watch on Monday, only one third of the Syrian refugee children in Turkey are attending school. Of more than 700,000 children, only about 200,000 were attending classes in the previous school year, the report said.

Turkey has been hosting more than 2 million refugees from Syria since the country's crisis began in 2011.

"If a child doesn't go to school, it will create big problems in the future – they will end up on the streets, or go back to Syria to die fighting, or be radicalized into extremists, or die in the ocean trying to reach Europe," read the report.

The 62-page report documented the obstacles that prevent Syrian children from getting formal education in Turkey. Language barriers and financial difficulties were among the impediments mentioned in the report.

Many other children face bullying and social integration difficulties that lead them to drop out, the report said. Other refugee children are not attending school due to working to financially support their families.

Turkey allowed Syrian children to attend public schools last year, but did not provide sufficient schools for non-Turkish speakers.

Human Rights Watch called on Ankara to work quickly to secure these children's education. Syria has been gripped by deadly violence since March 2011. More than 230,000 people have reportedly been killed and millions displaced due to the violence fueled by the foreign-sponsored militants in Syria.

WHAT CHRISTIANITY SAYS ABOUT SERVING HUMANITY

The Bible says in the book of acts, chapter 20 verse 35 “In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Here we are informed by Jesus that money should be earned. However, Jesus then states that more blessings are showered upon the person who is generous than the one who just earns without sharing it with others.

Jesus once again in the Bible speaks on the importance of helping other human beings in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 6 verse 38 “Give, and it will be given to you”.

“Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed” (Proverbs 19:17). A similar message is repeated in the Qur’an in Surah Taghabun, chapter 64 “Give a goodly loan to Allah and Allah will multiply it for you”. The ‘goodly loan’ refers to giving charity to other human beings.

Look at what the book of Proverbs 21:13 has to say about generosity, “Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered”.

Many people question, “Why aren’t my prayers heard by God?” The answer is given in the above verse whereby we are told that if you do not help other human beings on this earth, then by no means shall your prayers be answered.

“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:2-4)

There are many people within our community who serve humanity so that they can show off with their wealth. In fact, there are people who go for pilgrimage (eg. Ziaarat of Imam Hussein) so that they can boast to others that they have a lot of wealth. These kinds of pilgrimage have no use and will not be accepted by the lord of the heavens as it has been done with the intention of showing off.

A person can give his wealth openly but his intention is important. If he is giving wealth openly because he wants others to follow suit, then there is no problem with it. However, if his intention is to show off, then he is labelled as a ‘hypocrite’ by Jesus Christ (peace be upon him).

Published on Thursday, September 24, 2015 by Rev. John Dear:

“Hope and healing, peace and justice!” That’s what Pope Francis called us to this morning as he addressed the Congress. “Summon the courage and the intelligence to resolve today’s many geopolitical and economic crises,” he said. “Our efforts must aim at restoring hope, righting wrongs, maintaining commitments, and thus promoting the well-being of individuals and of peoples. We must move forward together, as one, in a renewed spirit of fraternity and solidarity, cooperating generously for the common good.”

“Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the Lord delivers him; the Lord protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land; you do not give him up to the will of his enemies. The Lord sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness you restore him to full health.” (Psalms 41:1-3)

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers”. (Hebrews 13:2)

“Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon. The LORD will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an

ever-flowing spring.” (Isaiah 58:10-11).

Many people want to come out of the depths of darkness and enter into light. The Bible gives us a formula on how we can receive salvation in the above verse whereby the Prophet Isaiah tells us to remember those who do not have food to eat.

Not many societies can claim that poverty does not exist within their society. This is why the Bible instructs its followers to help the needy. “There will always be some in the land who are poor. That is why I am commanding you to share freely with the poor and with other Israelites in need.” (Deuteronomy 15:11)

HINDUISM PROMOTING SERVICE TO HUMANITY

The Artha Shastras, one of the Hindu scriptures written in 300 BCE by a man of wisdom called Kautilya, gives advice for householders. It states that they should always be hospitable towards the guests, and no guest should be denied food. There is a tradition in Hinduism that says that a place should always be kept empty at the table for the Atithi (the unexpected guest).

“One may amass wealth with hundreds of hands but one should also distribute it with thousands of hands. If someone keeps all that he accumulates for himself and does not give it to others, the hoarded wealth will eventually prove to be the cause of ruin”. (Atharva Veda 3: 24-25)

This tells us that we should work hard in our lives and earn money. However, after earning money in our lives, we should share our money with other human beings. In India, people say “The world is one family”.

The great Hindu teacher and leader Mahatma Gandhi believed: “it is wrong to believe that a poor person is only getting what they deserve because of bad karma in a previous life. Every person is a part of Brahman (the ultimate reality) and people should take care of each other. Helping others is the best way to reach Brahman and understand what it really means to be human”.

Here Gandhi emphasizes on human equality. He denies the philosophy of caste system. Gandhi believes that all human beings should be treated with respect and honour. Islam preaches a similar thing in the aspect of equality. The Qur’an states in 49:13 that different tribes, nations and races have been created so that people understand one another and not for despising each other.

At the beginning, mankind and the obligation of selfless service were created together. “Through selfless service, you will always be fruitful and find the fulfillment of your desires: this is the promise of the Creator ... Every selfless act, Arjuna, is born from the eternal, infinite Godhead. God is present in every act of service. All life turns on this law, O Arjun. Whoever violates it, indulging his senses for his own pleasure and ignoring the needs of others, has wasted his life. But those who realize the God within are always satisfied. Having found the source of joy and fulfillment, they no longer seek happiness from the external world. They have nothing to gain or lose by any action; neither people nor things can affect their security The ignorant work for their own profit, Arjuna; the wise work for the welfare of the world, without thought to themselves. By abstaining from work you will confuse the ignorant, who are engrossed in the actions. Perform all work carefully, guided by compassion.” (Bhagavad Gita 3:10-26)

Swami Vivekananda’s lecture stated :

“Our duty to others means helping others; doing good to the world. What should we do good to the world? Apparently to help the world, but really to help ourselves. We should always try to help the world, that should be the highest motive in us; but if we consider well, we find that the world does not require our help at all. This world was not made that you or I should come and help it. I once read a sermon in which it was said, “As this beautiful world is very good, because it gives us time and opportunity to help others.” Apparently, this is a very beautiful sentiment, but is it not a blasphemy to say that the world needs our help? We cannot deny that there is much misery in it; to go out and help others is, therefore, the best thing we can do, although in the long run, we shall find that helping others

is only helping ourselves. “

Many ask the question regarding the identification of one self. Mahatma Gandhi said “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”.

Q: How do I know what exactly will give me happiness and true contentment in my life?

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said “When you get it you will know. See, there are two kinds of happiness, one is the happiness that you get by getting and another is by giving. Like children, if you give them sweets in their hands they become so happy, happiness of gaining something. But if you ask the adults of the house, the grandmother and the grandfather when their grandchildren visit they make different kinds of food and feed everybody and they are happy. It’s a mature joy of the elders in giving. When they give somebody something they feel so happy. So until you don’t give yourself to others you will not find contentment or happiness. You can never be content in taking. Contentment comes only in giving. But people want to be contented in taking and they go after things but no one finds contentment. That is why people are not contented. Only in giving there is happiness.”

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said “When ‘I’ is replaced by ‘We’, even ‘Illness’ becomes ‘Wellness’”. He also says “Love is giving everything and taking nothing”.

BUDDHISM ON HELPING OTHERS

“If you light a lamp for someone else it will also brighten your path” (Buddha)

A bright and pleasant future lies in your hands. If you want a better future then think about others in the community. If you give service to some then God will make sure that your future is bright.

“A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion things that renew humanity”. (Buddha)

“The essence of Buddhism is if you can, helping others. If not, then at least refrain from hurting others”. (Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama)

There are many who help other human beings but ultimately cause harm and humiliation to them. Serving humanity is not only throwing money at the poor or the less fortunate but it is about being compassionate to all human beings

“If, for my own sake, I cause harm to others,
I shall be tormented in hellish realms;
But if for the sake of others I cause harm to myself,
I shall acquire all that is magnificent.

By holding myself in high esteem
I shall find myself in unpleasant realms, ugly and stupid;
But should this [attitude] be shifted to others
I shall acquire honours in a joyful realm.

If I employ others for my own purposes
I myself shall experience servitude,
But if I use myself for the sake of others
I shall experience only lordliness.”

(Buddhism. Shantideva, Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life 8.126-128)

SIKHISM ON SERVING MANKIND

“Without selfless service are no objectives fulfilled; In service lies the purest action”.(Sikhism. Adi Granth, Maru, M.1, p. 992)

“One who serves and seeks no recompense Finds union with the Lord. Such a servant alone takes the Master’s guidance, says Nanak, As on him is divine grace.”(Sikhism. Adi Granth, Sukhmani 18, M.5, pp. 286f.)

Most religions give guidance about how we should treat other people. The Sikh faith teaches that service to the community is important.

Sewa:

It is an important aspect of Sikhism to provide a service to the community, including the Sikh community (Khalsa) and others. All Sikhs should be prepared to give up some of their time, talents and energy to help others. Sikhism requires service to Waheguru (God), to the Khalsa and to all of humanity.

Sikhism teaches that people should try to become less self-centred (manmukh) and more God-centred (gurmukh) and should live their lives in the selfless service of others (sewa).

True worship consists in the meditation of God’s name.... There can be no worship without performing good deeds. (Guru Granth Sahib)

There are three different parts of sewa:

Tan: physical service, eg, working in the langar and helping to look after the gurdwara.

Man: mental service, eg, studying the Guru Granth Sahib Ji and teaching it to others.

Dhan: material service to other people, eg, giving money to charities or giving time to help people who are in need.

All of these must be done because a Sikh wants to serve Waheguru and not for personal gain. So by performing sewa, Sikhs serve God and the world.

“A place in God’s court can only be attained if we do service to others in this world... Wandering ascetics, warriors, celibates, holy men, none of them can obtain moksha without performing sewa.” (Guru Granth Sahib)

Sikhs should live their lives according to three equally important principles

Nam Japna: remember the name of Waheguru this can be done by meditating on the name Waheguru. Prayer, hard work and generosity are all equally important and Sikhs should not spend all their time on prayer

Kirat Karna: earn a living by honest means. Work is essential for the individual, the family and the community and a Sikh has a duty to provide for basic needs. It does not matter what the work is, provided that it is honest and not against the teachings of the Gurus. Sikhism says that it is not wrong to be rich provided that the money is gained honestly. But it is wrong to live your life just to make a lot of money.

Vand Chhakna: share everything in charity with people who are less fortunate. Sikhs should live their lives on the principles of generosity and self-sacrifice.

Guru Amar Das taught the idea of daswandh. This is giving a tenth of surplus money to the community. This money may be used for building schools or hospitals or to help those who are poor or suffering. This is similar to the Islamic concept of Zakaat whereby a percentage of someone’s wealth is given to the poor. Zakaat is recommended in several places within the Qur’an such as 2:43, 2:83, 2:110 etc

Sikhs believe that wealth is only acceptable if it is used for other people such as giving them work or food. It is the responsibility of the rich to look after the poor.

(Source:<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/rs/poverty/>)

sikhconcernrev1.shtml)

“Blessed is the godly person and the riches they possess because they can be used for charitable purposes and to give happiness.”(*Guru Amar Das*)

A place in God’s court can only be attained if we do service to others in this world.(*Guru Granth Sahib Ji 26*)

Are Sikhs only supposed to help fellow Sikhs?

No. According to Sikhism, all human beings deserve to be helped because “All beings and creatures are His(God’s); He belongs to all”
(*Guru Granth Sahib*)

CONCLUSION

I, Ejaz Bhalloo, am addressing all of you and am addressing myself to embark the path of generosity due to the fact that a path of generosity is a path leading us straight to heaven.

I would like to thank all of you for sharing your time in reading this book. I hope all of us practically follow what is mentioned in this book.