



Philanthropy is a Part of “Being Human”

Why men & women might similarly be inclined and engaged in the practice of GIVING

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Philanthropy etymologically means "love of humanity" in the sense of caring, nourishing, developing and enhancing "what it is to be human." Philanthropy impacts both benefactors by identifying and exercising their values in giving and volunteering as well as beneficiaries through tangible benefits. The most conventional modern definition is "private initiatives, for public good, focusing on quality of life". This combines the social scientific aspect developed in the 20th century with the original humanistic tradition, and serves to contrast philanthropy with business (private initiatives for private good, focusing on material prosperity) and government (public initiatives for public good, focusing on law and order).

Instances of philanthropy commonly overlap with instances of charity, though not all charity is philanthropy, or vice versa. The difference commonly cited is that charity relieves the pains of social problems, whereas philanthropy attempts to solve those problems at their root causes (the difference between giving a hungry man a fish, and teaching him how to fish for himself).

I have presented my understanding and practice of Philanthropy in Islam being a way of life.¹ Here I humbly wish to present a hypothesis that Philanthropy is integral to being human - regardless of gender, color, ethnicity or faith. Giving is as inherent and integral a human need as it is to receive.

Being a woman, mother and grandmother I continue to ponder on our shared beginnings.² Arabic word for womb is Rahm, a root word for two highest attributes of God – Rahman and Raheem. Rahman meaning Merciful and Raheem meaning Compassionate. This has a deeper connotation in gratitude and reciprocity to exemplify the human needs to give and to receive. These amazing ‘attributes’ are evident within moments after birth as the life-balance of give and take begins. The baby's first cry is not a cry of protest, but a cry of life, announcing that the transition between the womb and the outside world has been safely negotiated. For this reason, the newborn's first cry is music to the ears of the new parents - a gift of love, fulfillment and hope.



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In 1943, Abraham Maslow proposed discoveries of human motivation and development that are summarized in a pyramid diagram containing the most basic needs along the bottom, and the most complex at the top. Maslow's scientific studies focused on the most distinguished humans (including Albert Einstein), which provided him with a deep understanding for how highly accomplished people have found success in their lives.



Sir John Templeton wanted his philanthropy to reach scientists, theologians, and opinion leaders, but his ultimate audience was all of humankind. He hoped to help every man and woman to acquire a passion for humble discovery, including discovery about God and God's purposes. His aim was to liberate and empower the human mind, to encourage people to overcome their passivity and fatalism and to ask probing questions about life and existence. He believed that humility and open-mindedness provided the surest path, to both material and spiritual progress. In the face of God's creation, Sir John was consumed by a deep and abiding

gratitude. Each new discovery reinforced this sense of gratitude and provided, in his view, evidence of both God's love for humankind and His call to each of us to join a process of continuous creativity³ and I might add, to a continuous culture of generosity – as each human is a vicegerent of God on earth to do his best.⁴ I believe knowing one another is essential to bring about peaceful giving and sharing for a better world.

“It is not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.”

Mother Theresa

¹ Islamic Philanthropy is a way of life, Shakeela Z. Hassan MD.

http://www.philanthropy.iupui.edu/files/file/insights_february_2013_2.pdf

² Sound, Rhythm and Movement – the basics that define us. Shakeela Z. Hassan MD. TEDxoflChicago 2014.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSZrkcmLJw&index=4&list=PLSRNoUx8w3rOUjYzW76y_oMA9NFmJVEWl

³ Philanthropic Vision: John Templeton- <http://www.templeton.org/print/sir-john-templeton/philanthropic-vision>

⁴ Qura'n: al-Baqara 2/30



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