

The Benefits of Generosity

Our lives belong to us as much as they belong to others; our lives belong to this life as much as they belong to another. Helping and supporting one another with unconditional love and for the benefit of the fellow man is imperative for both lives. Helping or contributing out of compassion gives a special joy to the spirit. It bestows relief and tranquility on the mind. It consolidates inner peace. Recent scientific studies also prove this. According to scientific data, when we act generously, when we show generosity, the parts of our brain associated with pleasure and social ties activate and the endorphins that are released contribute positively to our inner harmony as well as our spiritual and bodily health. In other words, everything we give away without any self-interest unfolds our inner world. A bond forms between giver and receiver.

It would do well to remember Saint Francis of Assisi's (1182-1226) laconicism/point on the subject, where he masterfully explains the importance of giving. He says, **"To give is to receive, to pardon is to be pardoned, and to die is to be born into eternal life."**

The best way to help life, to contribute to it is to leave undercurrent negative emotions behind and put our talents and resources at the use of other people. We should know that everything done out of the goodness of our heart and without expecting anything in return will be reciprocated with added blessing. Everything we give in life, whether consciously or subconsciously, all of it is energy. Energy returns to the source from whence it came. Therefore, we must always keep in mind that any kind of energy we give in life, such as greed (negative) or generosity (positive), will absolutely return to us.

Those who act generously with their possessions actually benefit themselves before others. The material and spiritual growth and enrichment of a person, as well as peace and stability in their earthly life is directly proportional to

their generosity and what they give to life in their area of responsibility. If they have internalized a human-centered mentality, they value human dignity, which is holy. Thus, they are empowered by the spirit. Vital energy courses through their self (ego) and keeps it illuminated. If they haven't adopted a human-centered mentality, vital energy turns against them and they fall victim to their self (ego). A human-centered mentality necessitates giving back to life, pure and unadulterated, what one receives from it in order to gain more back. If all material and spiritual possessions are monopolized out of greed and stinginess, they stagnate. With time, they depreciate and cause impoverishment.

As is known, if a watermill refuses to unload its water, it will soon drown itself. However, if the water flows free, it will prove invaluable to the watermill by generating power. And everyone can enjoy the resulting ground flour. The same goes for humans. People are required to give back to life the free gifts bestowed by the will of God as assets for their own benefit, for the benefit of others, and for individual and social peace. Otherwise, like the watermill, they will inescapably drown in their own water.

This shows that the easiest way of giving is to give away one's material possessions. And yet, if anyone throws in the towel at this point, they should know that true giving is to give from one's self, from one's own essence. In the words of famous thinker/writer Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), **"Rings and jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself."**

According to the logic that says, **"Devote your talents and skills to helping others"** (Romans 12: 6-8), allocating your spiritual gifts to the ownership of the ego yields no benefits whatsoever. Quite the contrary, it leads to frustration. On that score, we should not expect anything from life without giving to life. It is folly to only take from life, bury or waste your talents, act

selfishly and with greed, and then expect to be treated generously. Without contributing positively in our own sphere, we cannot hope for any contributions from life towards our own standards. If we wait, we might end up violating the ultimate purpose and divine meaning of life. It's helpful to balance this awareness at all times. Because divine justice and mercy are in the very spirit and center of the universe. The more we impart from the self, the more our wealth multiplies and our self flourishes. Everything we give from the self will surely find its way back to us (in different ways). Therefore, if we give the world the best in our possession, the best will come back around to us. In due course, it will come back thirty, sixty, or hundredfold. This is a spiritual law. This law is infallible. Because the bank/system of divine justice never declares bankruptcy. We feel much better when we check our intentions and offer life our love, understanding, joy, compassion, talents, gifts, creativity, and forgiveness with a sincere heart. Our self-confidence grows and, most importantly, we love and value ourselves more!

We must always keep this in mind in order not to fall into poverty. We lose whatever we hide away for ourselves and dread losing. Only the things we give to life belong to us. Remember, full ownership does not exist. What we think is ours and the things we own (position, mission, vision, authority, wealth, knowledge, status, career, profession.... and all else) are merely entrusted to us. They are on lease. We are entitled only to use them. When we use them for other than their intended purpose, we violate the lease. Therefore, one of life's higher purposes is using our possessions with a constructive attitude for the benefit of ourselves and society, and never forgetting that we will lose everything that we do not appreciate through the highs and lows of life.

In "The Wisdom of Sands," famous French author/poet Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1900-1944) has this to say about greed: **"A greedy person is not one who withholds his possessions for fear of depleting his fortune, but**

one whose face does not light up when you offer him something. A soil that stays ugly when you cast your seeds is greedy."

The following quote is from "Minima Moralia" by famous German sociologist Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969): **"However, even if amidst superfluity the gift were superfluous – and this is a lie, privately as much as socially, for there is no-one today for whom imagination would not discover what would delight him utterly – people who no longer gave would still be in need of giving. In them wither the irreplaceable faculties which cannot flourish in the isolated cell of pure inwardness, but only in live contact with the warmth of things. A chill descends on all they do, the kind word remains unspoken, the consideration unexercised. This chill finally recoils on those from whom it emanates. Every undistorted relationship, perhaps indeed the conciliation that is part of organic life itself, is a gift. He who through consequential logic becomes incapable of it, makes himself a thing and freezes."**

One of Turkey's famous authors and a man of original ideas in his own field, Prof. Dr. Kemal Sayar gives the following opinion on this subject: **"The faculties which define humanity can flourish in the energy of live contact with the world and the consciousness which flows and spreads from them to us, us to them. We have been ignoring this for a long time. The general reason for this is not selfishness but a fear of being let down or rejected, of losing freedom and being brought under the yoke. The free and independent metropolitan people who do not look for each other have been forced to learn self-sufficiency. We expect neither angel nor mortal man to pat us on the back or comfort us, our eyes and lips are dry. Even though we are no outlaws or vagrants, we eat of the Bread of Exile. We do not know how to receive from our fellow humans and we forget to give to them. Irreplaceable human qualities like love,**

compassion, kindness, mercy, generosity, etc. are quietly withdrawing from our midst. There is a growing emptiness created by a lack of giving in the desertlike wake of humanity." Famous German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) fairly corroborates this when he says, **"The desert grows: Woe to him who harbors deserts!"**

The level and understanding of this knowledge must be increased for the benefit of society. As understanding of this knowledge grows, so will the level of merciful awareness. As the power of this knowledge grows along with its application in daily life, it will become easier to rein in the ego/carnal passions. Developing a meaningful whole that is accordingly consistent will contribute to peace and stability, as well as social cohesion.

It should not be forgotten that in the market of life, generosity is more profitable than greed. With the measure we use, it will be measured to us. Mercy and care is shown to those who show mercy. Those who help one another with conscious awareness are strengthened. Those who are strengthened help one another. For we reap what we sow. We receive what we give. Whatever we do, we do to ourselves!

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