

The Poor

Beware! Fear God when dealing with the problem of the poor who have none to patronise them, who are forlorn, indigent, helpless and are greatly torn in mind – victims of the vicissitudes of time. Among them are some who do not question their lot in life and who, notwithstanding their misery, do not go about seeing alms.

For God's sake, safeguard their rights, for on you rests the responsibility of protecting their interests.

Assign for their uplift a portion of the state exchequer (Bayt al-Mal), wherever they may be, whether close at hand or far away from you. The rights of the two should be equal in your eye. Do not let any preoccupation slip them from your mind, for no excuse whatsoever for the disregard of their rights will be acceptable to God.

Do not treat their interests as of less importance than your own, and never keep them outside the purview of your important considerations, and mark the persons who look down upon them and of whose conditions they keep you in ignorance.

Select from among your officers such men as are meek and God fearing who can keep you properly informed of the condition of the poor. Make such provision for these poor people as shall not oblige you to offer an excuse before God on the Day of Judgement for, it is this section of the people which, more than any other, deserves benevolent treatment.

Seek your reward from God by giving to each of them what is due to him and enjoin on yourself as a sacred duty the task of meeting the needs of such aged among them as have no independent means of livelihood and are averse to seek alms. The discharge of this duty is what usually proves very trying to rulers, but is very welcome to societies which are gifted with foresight. It is only such societies or nations who truly carry out with equanimity their covenant with God to discharge their duty to the poor.