

Islamic Generosity

“Be generous as Allah is generous to thee” (Qur’an: Chapter 28 Verse 77)

It is the foundation of Islamic generosity. Allah gave us every thing, right from our very existence up to the highest place of honor in His presence in the life hereafter. Our natural instinct demands that we should express our gratitude towards Him – in words as well as in actions. Prayers prescribed by religion serve the purpose of saying ‘Thank you’ to Him? The verse of Qur’an quoted above shows us the way. It is by services of humanity that we can show our gratitude towards Allah.

Naturally, it follows that, when we help any person, we should not do it in expectation of any return or any thanks from the beneficiary. On the contrary, we must be thankful to him that by accepting our help, he gave us a chance to demonstrate our gratitude to our Creator. Virtue is its own reward because it satisfies our natural urge to manifest our thankfulness towards Allah.

This, according to Islam, must be our attitude when we are helping others. But what is our obligation when we are on the receiving end of the aid? Islam teaches us that we must be thankful, in the first place, to Allah; because He is the actual source of help. And then we should be thankful to that man whom Allah made His agent in that help. Thus all persons who were instrumental in that help must be thanked sincerely. The Holy Prophet has said: “He who did not thank people, did not thank Allah.”

A recent incident has reminded me how far the world is vet from real religion tenets. In last few days, there was much hue and cry about National Service. Had our society been based upon above mentioned mutual respect and co-operation, as taught by religion, such things would have been impossible. The nation would have helped the students without any expectation of repayment in any form. But the students, on the other hand, would have insisted that they should be given a chance to prove their appreciation of, and gratitude towards, nation for the help given in time of need. How inspiring would have it been to see the nation, poor as it is, giving education to its youth, without feeling the necessity of reminding him of his obligations; and then to see that youth, not shouting against the representatives of nation, but insisting that he, on his own accord, would serve the nation on a nominal pay and donate the balance to nation, not for two years only but so long as the full expenses incurred during his education are not reimbursed.

Let us pray a time comes when this vision remains a vision no longer; when not the conflict of interests, as taught by materialism, but sincere co-operation, as taught by religion, becomes the basis of society.

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