

Charity Guru Granth Sahib

Importance of Charity

Below are Shabads from the [Sri Guru Granth Sahib](#) that give the Sikh guidance on this issue:

In the following Shabads, Guru Sahib informs of the importance of giving in charity and put this virtue together with "truth", "Truth and charity are my white clothes". Further, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib highlights five qualities, "truthfulness", "honest living", "goodwill to all", "praise of the Lord" and finally "charity in the name of God". The second Shabad tells the reader that the benefits of giving in charity is obtained by chanting the name of God. Reading these Shabads in full, it appears that giving in charity without the remembrance of God has very little spiritual benefit for the devotee.

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ਰਤਾ ਪੈਨਣ ਮਨ ਰਤਾ ਸ ਪੇਦੀ ਸਤ ਦਾਨ ॥ ਨੀਲੀ ਸਿਆਹੀ ਕਦਾ ਕਰਣੀ ਪਹਿਰਣ ਪੈਰ ਧਿਆਨ ॥

rataa painan man rataa supaydee sat daan. neelee si-aahee kadaa karnee pahiran pair Dhi-aan.

My mind is imbued with the Lord's Love; it is dyed a deep crimson. **Truth and charity** are my white clothes. The blackness of sin is erased by my wearing of blue clothes, and meditation on the Lord's Lotus Feet is my robe of honor.

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ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਮੁਖ ਖ ਉਜਲਾ ਜਪਿ ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨ ਇਸਨਾਨ ॥ ਕਾਮ ਕ ਰੋਧ ਲੋਭ ਬਿਨਸਿਆ ਤਜਿਆ ਸਭ ਅਭਿਮਾਨ ॥੨॥

gur parsaadee mukh oojlaa jap naam daan isnaan. kaam kroDh lobh binsi-aa taji-aa sabh abhimaan. ॥2॥

By Guru's Grace, your face shall be radiant. Chanting the Naam, you shall receive the benefits of **giving charity** and taking cleansing baths.

Sexual desire, anger and greed are eliminated, and all egotistical pride is abandoned. ॥2॥

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ਪੰਜਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਵਖਤ ਪੰਜਿ ਪੰਜਾ ਪੰਜੇ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸਚ ਹਲਾਲ ਦੁ ਇ ਤੀਜਾ ਖੈਰ ਖ ਦਾਇ ॥ ਚਉਥੀ ਨੀਅਤਿ ਰਾਸਿ ਮਨ ਪੰਜਵੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਨਾਇ ॥

panj nivaajaa vakhat panj panjaa panjay naa-o. pahilaa sach halaal du-ay teejaa khair khudaa-ay. cha-uthee nee-at raas man panjvee sifat sanaa-ay.

There are five prayers and five times of day for prayer; the five have five names. Let the first be truthfulness, the second honest living, and the third **charity in the Name of God**. Let the fourth be good will to all, and the fifth the praise of the Lord.

Naam is above Charity

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ਪੰਨ ਦਾਨ ਜਪ ਤਪ ਜੇਤੇ ਸਭ ਉਪਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਸਨਾ ਜੋ ਜਪੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਪੂਰਨ ਕਾਮੁ ॥੩॥

punn daan jap tap jaytay sabh oopar naam. har har rasnaa jo japai tis pooran kaam. ॥3 ॥

Donations to charity, meditation and penance - above all of them is the Naam.

One who chants with his tongue the Name of the Lord, Har, Har - his works are brought to perfect completion. ॥3 ॥

Give to the Right Cause

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ਅਭਿਆਗਤ ਏਹ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਭਰਮੁ ॥ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਦਿਤੇ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਤੇਹੇ ਜੇਹਾ ਧਰਮੁ ॥੧॥

ਅਭੈ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਪਰਮ ਪਦੁ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਭੀਖਰੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਭੋਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਪਾਏ ਕੋਇ ॥੨॥

abhi-aagat ayh na aakhee-ahi jin kai man meh bharam. tin kay ditay naankaa tayho jayhaa Dharam. ॥1 ॥

abhai niranjan param pad taa kaa bheekhak ho-ay. tis kaa bhojan naankaa virvaa paa-ay ko-ay. ॥2 ॥

Do not call the wandering beggars holy men, if their minds are filled with doubt. Whoever gives to them, O Nanak, earns the same sort of merit. ॥1 ॥

One who begs for the supreme status of the Fearless and Immaculate Lord - how rare are those who have the opportunity, O Nanak, to give food to such a person. ॥2 ॥

Failing to give

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ਧਾਇ ਧਾਇ ਕੁ ਰਿਪਨ ਸੁ ਰਮੁ ਕੀਨੇ ਇਕਤੁ ਰ ਕਰੀ ਹੈ ਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਦਾਨੁ ਪੰਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਸੰਤਨ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਿਤ ਹੀ ਕਾਜਿ ਨ ਆਇਆ ॥੧॥

Dhaa-ay Dhaa-ay kirpan saram keeno ikatar karee hai maa-i-aa. daan punn nahee santan sayvaa kit hee kaaj na aa-i-aa. ॥1 ॥

With great effort and exertion, the miser works to gather in the riches of Maya.

He does not give anything in charity or generosity, and he does not serve the Saints; his wealth does not do him any good at all. ॥1 ॥

The world's major religions teach that their God is good and as part of this argument they say that God wants a happy and good life for everyone. The religions teach that their followers should try to make the world a better place for everyone. Despite these beliefs, the world is a place where many people are poor and suffering whilst others live more

comfortable lives.

People living in the developing countries often have a very low standard of living and do not benefit from modern medical care and attention. Religions teach that this is wrong and that everyone should have the opportunity to benefit from 'God's bounty'. Religious people do not believe that they should be better off than the followers of other religions. However, there are still very many poor and underprivileged people in the world while there are some very rich religious people and institutions. Religious people believe that they should work towards ending poverty and help others to improve their living standards.

The First Article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

The Declaration also says that:

..freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people..the peoples of the United Nations have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

Sikhism

Sikhs believe that wealth is only acceptable if it is used to help other people, such as giving them work or food. Hard work is also essential for a Sikh - begging or not working is lazy and selfish.

It is the responsibility of the rich to look after the poor:

"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 26)

Charity is a very important part of Sikh teachings because equality and compassion are essential for a spiritual life. All religions and all nations must be helped to live a good and peaceful life. Charity begins with caring for the family - Sikhs have followed this teaching in their social policies, building hospitals, care homes, special schools and hospices. Many Sikhs also take part in charity work all over the world such as Oxfam and Christian Aid. Sewa or service to the community (Sadhsangat) is essential to the life of a Sikh. They should be prepared to give up some of their time and energy to help others.

For a Sikh it is a privilege and a duty to provide langar (food) in the Gurdwara for the whole congregation after the weekly service of worship. The langar is part of the act of worship and a very important aspect of Sikh life. Guru Nanak wanted everyone to be able to eat the same food in the langar, to share the tasks of preparation, cooking, serving and cleaning.