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EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECTS OF DONATION ACCORDING TO ISLAMIC TEACHINGS AND THE LAW OF ATTRACTION

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ABSTRACT

According to Islamic teachings and the law of attraction, donation (*bakhsish*) to others has unquestionable effects in the donator's life. Islamic teachings lead to greater results than the law of attraction since they discuss circumstances of donation as well as the scope and quantity of the effects of this act. These circumstances are comprehensive and consider all aspects of the issue. Furthermore, regarding donation in Islam, the scope of the effects, which cover both this world and the next, as well as the clarity in Islam about quantity and extent of the effects increases the motivation of the donator twofold. This demonstrates the greater effectiveness of this teaching in Islam when compared with the same idea in the law of attraction. This law deals with the effects of donation only qualitatively, and emphasises that donation to others results in circulation of wealth. To explain, through the act of donation, the donator issues positive waves or energy into the universe, and since according to the law, 'like attracts like', a greater amount of positive energy flows toward the donator, who in turn attracts more wealth.

Keywords: Effects of donation, Islamic teachings, the law of attraction, conditions of donation

INTRODUCTION

Humans are in constant search of the secret to success and happiness in their lives.

According to proponents of the law of attraction, this law is the hidden secret that

can usher a person to the heights of happiness and good fortune [1]. In addition to being known as the law of attraction, this law is also known as the law of affinity, the law of abundant return, the secret, and creative visualization. The originators of this idea in the modern sense are Esther and Jerry Hicks. Some standard bearers of this law include Rhonda Byrne, Wayne Dyer, Michael Losier, and Norman Vincent Peale. The law of attraction states that the only factor in achieving happiness in life is a person's desire, which can be realised through mental control. Mental control means that if a person wishes to realise their desire, they must set aside their negative waves and achieve their desires by sending positive waves. Using this idea as a basis, supporters of the law of attraction expound on this theory and posit that one method of gathering wealth is giving to others. As per this idea, donating to others brings about emanation of positive waves into the universe; the effect of this manifests as increase of wealth. Islamic teachings also itemise effects for donation to others. This study seeks to explain the effects of donation to others according to Islamic teachings and the law of attraction. This research seeks to answer the following questions using a descriptive-analytical method:

According to Islamic teachings, what are the conditions for donation and what is the extent of its effects?

What are the effects of donation in accordance with the law of attraction?

What similarities and differences exist between the effects of donation in Islamic teachings and in the law of attraction?

2. Donation in Islamic Teachings

Generosity is a desirable attribute which has been emphasised in Islamic teachings. The Quran and Islamic traditions both consider this significant issue and its effects in the lives of people [2]. The effects of this act are not limited to the donee, but have even greater effects for the generous person [3]. The Quran invites people to donate wealth and property for their own benefit. It asserts that if people do not give, they are the ones that suffer loss. However, there is no discussion about the gains of the needy from donations [4]. In this way, the Quran points out that the advantages of donation to the donor are so great, it seems that through donation, a person is making a lucrative investment only for their own benefit. What are the conditions for the donation intended in Islamic discourse? How are its effects manifested in the lives of human beings?

2.1. Conditions for Donation

In accordance with Islamic teachings, giving or donating to others has conditions with central roles in the productiveness and results of donation in one's life. These conditions, which complement one another in achievement of the goal, i.e. effectualness of a donation, are as follows:

2.1.1. Donation with the Intent of God's Satisfaction: In various verses, the Quran states that the goal of donation must be the satisfaction of God [5]. This means that the goal of the donor must be to follow religious rulings [6] with pure intentions and perform the act with the satisfaction of God in mind. The person must not intend ostentation and hypocrisy [7].

2.1.2. Donation Free of Negative Consequences for the Needy: Quranic teachings indicate that donation must not involve *minna* (implications that there are strings attached) or *adhiyya* (harassment) of the needy person [8]. *Minna* refers to an act by the performer of a good deed which makes the beneficence unpleasant or even intolerable. For instance, the person performing a good deed might say to the recipient, 'I did such and such good thing for you' or the benefactor may do something that has such a meaning. *Adhiyya* means for the benefactor to cause harm or loss, even a small amount, to the needy person [9]. In fact,

sincerity must be continuous and permanent, like lifeblood, in order that the donations may grow and become productive. Any *minna* or *adhiyya* that is inflicted against a needy person, for any number of egotistic reasons, shall thwart the movement of donations and effectively neuter them [10].

2.1.3. Moderation in Donation: Just as avarice and parsimony are condemned in the Quran, it also states that one must not forego the middle ground or go too far in donations [11]. Extravagance and indulgence has been mentioned in Islamic traditions as a scourge for donation [12].

2.1.4. Donation from Legitimate Wealth and Property: The Quran states, 'O you who have faith! Spend of the good things you have earned, and of what we bring forth for you from the earth, and do not be of the mind to give the bad part of it, for you yourselves would not take it, unless you overlook it. And know that Allah is all-sufficient, all-laudable' [13]. This verse discusses the kind of property that is donated, stating that the property must be good and pure. It must be something that the poor person takes with readiness, not something that they take reluctantly [14]. 'Good things' refers to property with value as well as legitimate property [15]. 'Bad things' refers to low-quality and illegitimate property

[16]. Islamic traditions also state that donations must be of legitimate property [17].

2.1.5. Donation from One's Favourite Property: Donation from one's favourite property is the condition for a perfect donation. In other words, if a benefactor desires the greatest effects for donation, he or she must fulfil this condition as well [18].

2.1.6. Donation in Secret: Another condition for perfection of donation is to perform it in secret or anonymously. The Quran states, 'If you disclose your charities, that is well, but if you hide them and give them to the poor, that is better for you, and it will atone for some of your misdeeds, and Allah is well aware of what you do '[19]. This verse endorses the act of donation performed both overtly and covertly. However, it places greater worth on hidden donations. It is noteworthy that in this verse, God has praised both overt and covert donations since both have good effects. Overt donations actively encourage people to perform good deeds. It also comforts the poor when they see that there are responsible people in the society who pay attention to their conditions. The virtue of concealed donations is that when the donor is anonymous, she or he is further removed from hypocrisy, *minna*, and harassment of the poor. Another advantage of this method is that it maintains the dignity and reputation of the

poor person. Therefore, it can be stated that donations given openly have a greater effect in improving the situation in the society; however, secret donations are more sincere and genuine. Since according to Islamic teachings, sincerity is one of the criteria for assessment of deeds, the more sincere an act, the more virtuous it is and the greater the rewards [20].

2.2. Effects of Donation

By observing the conditions for donation, the path to realisation of the effects of this act opens in a person's life. It must be added that according to Islamic teachings, like other good deeds, the act of donation involves rewards in the next life as well. This is because the religion of Islam is aimed at the happiness of people in both worlds, i.e. this world and the next. Hence, the Quran and Islamic traditions that describe rewards for donation do not only focus on worldly rewards [21]. In any case, the focus of this section is upon worldly and material effects of the act of donation.

Many Quranic verses promise rewards in this world in exchange for donation [22]. As per these verses, donating for good causes is like a lucrative investment since the return on donations is multiplied many times over. Even though the manner in which these rewards manifest in one's life is ambiguous in

these Quranic verses, God has guaranteed the rewards. Islamic traditions also corroborate the fact that the rewards and advantages of donation shall manifest in the lives of donors [23]. The amount and extent of the effects of donation in Islamic discourse is as follows:

2.2.1. Replacement of the Donated

Property: As stated by some Quranic verses and Islamic traditions, if a person donates some property or wealth, wealth worth at least the same amount will be returned to the person [24]. God states, Say, ‘Indeed my Lord expands the provision for whomever of His servants that He wishes and tightens it, and He will repay whatever you may spend, and He is the best of providers’[25]. Concerning the verse above, some Muslim exegetes believe that when God the Generous promises something, He does not observe equality or balance. Rather, He gives several times more, sometimes even a hundred times over, and also fills the place of donations with blessings in the best possible way [26]. Prophet Muhammad has stated, ‘The Lord said to me Himself: Give to others so I may give to you’ [27]. God’s promise signifies assured return on the property that is donated. God’s promise is true and unailing [28].

2.2.2. Exponential Returns on Donations:

Quranic verses and Islamic traditions emphasise manifold returns on donated

wealth and property [29]. Some verses utilise parables to better demonstrate the effects of donation in a person’s life [30]. The examples in these verses are indicative of tremendous effects for donation. God has stated: ‘The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is that of a grain which grows seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. Allah enhances severalfold whomever He wishes, and Allah is all-bounteous, all-knowing’ [31]. The parable in this verse is a practical reality since in agriculture, it is possible to grow a single seed into seven hundred or even thousands [32]. Islam teaches that donations repel unfortunate events and increase one’s sustenance and wealth [33].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

3. Donation in the Law of Attraction

Donation holds a special place in the law of attraction. This position is discussed below.

3.1. What is the Law of Attraction?

Rhonda Byrne sees the law of attraction as something similar to the law of magnetism or gravity. She believes that everything a person receives in life is drawn into their life by their own thoughts. They enter a person’s life through the mental images he or she creates and develops. In this way, humans are creators of the events that they previously nourished in their minds in the form of thoughts [34]. Byrne maintains that all

historians, poets, musicians, and divine religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have implied this law. She even claims that there are indications of this law in inscriptions dating back to circa 3000 BCE. She claims that this law is the greatest and most reliable law upon which the entire universe rests [35]. The law of attraction holds that humans may attain their aspirations in three steps:

Step One - Identification of Desires: This step is achieved through identification of conflicts. A conflict is something a person does not like, does not feel good about, and evokes a negative mood. Through observation, perception, and identification of conflicts, one can clarify what one wants or likes.

Step Two - Focus on Desires: It is not enough to identify one's desires. Rather, one must also focus positively on them. This sort of positive concentration increases the power of the desire. The law of attraction states that the more a person concentrates and puts energy into something, the greater is the probability of achieving that desire.

Step Three – Allowing: This is the most important step in the process of attraction. Allowing means to be free of negative energy and doubt. Since if a person doubts that they will achieve their desires, the doubt will

manifest as negative energy which will nullify the positive energy of one's desires [36]. The flow of these steps is based on the ability to control one's own mind. If the mind is controlled, it can release unlimited energy. For this reason, persons who cannot control their thoughts fail, and those who practice thought control can perform great things [37]. An encapsulation of the law of attraction is that thoughts transform into matter [38]. In the opinion of Wayne Dyer, the entire world is like a catalogue in the hands of the visualiser who can order whatever she wants for the world to make it for her [39]. This order will be realised only if the focus, attention, and energy of a person is directed toward its realisation without even a moment of doubt [40]. This is because the subconscious makes anything in the mind of a person into a reality. Therefore, as long as a person cannot control his mind and bring it in line with his desires, he cannot achieve his goals – manifestation or realisation of his desires. Therefore, according to the law of attraction, every person is a living magnet that attracts conditions surrounding it through emission of thoughts. These conditions are a result of the person's own creativity since one can create a goal or aspiration in one's mind, give it form, and ultimately make it a reality [41].

The foundation of the law of attraction, according to many supporters and theorists of this law, consists of the concrete experiences of persons. By enumerating numerous examples of individuals who utilised this law to achieve their desires, they try to prove the law of attraction [42]. It is important to note that some theorists consider the law of attraction to be based on certain principles. The most important of these principles is the similarity law. This law states that like creates like [43]. Another matter that must be clarified relates to the relationship between the law of attraction and giving to others.

3.2. The Relationship between the Law of Attraction and Donation

The law of attraction is comprised of many laws which require validity of the law of attraction itself to hold true. Some of these laws include the secret to communicating with others, the secret to health, the secret of the universe, and finally, the secret of accumulating wealth [44]. Since the secret to accumulation of wealth is of especial import to people, it has been welcomed more enthusiastically by supporters of the law of attraction than its other laws. Most of the books written in this regard give special consideration to the secret to amassing wealth. There are some books that are entirely about methods of acquiring a fortune.

3.2.1. Approaches to Acquiring Wealth:

The following are some methods of attracting wealth.

3.2.1.1. Focus on Wealth: Focus on wealth can only be achieved by realisation of two things. First is to will it. Second is to believe that this desire can be fulfilled [45].

3.2.1.2. Create Motivation: This means to place positive emphatic phrases all around so that they are constantly visible [46].

3.2.1.3. Donation to Others: Giving to others is a principal method of acquisition of wealth since it has astounding results in people's lives. This method is explained below.

3.2.1.3.1. The Effects of Donation to Others: As stated by Wayne Dyer, overcoming greed opens a new path in a person's life. In this way, the world's gifts and blessings enter a person's life in a dynamic and exponential fashion. The sheer amount of these blessings leaves the person shocked and astounded [47]. According to Rhonda Byrne, conferring money to others is a very important and effective step in amassing money. This is because when a person gives money away, she is saying that she has much more money than she has donated. Hence, the law of attraction effectively returns more money to the person. Byrne cites wealthy people as evidence of her claim. She asserts that the most wealthy

people on earth are those who have the most or greatest charities. They continuously donate money, which activates the law of attraction and sends more money their way [48]. Jack Canfield, who is a rich person himself, maintains that his tendency to share his wealth with others led to production of greater wealth. In his perspective, giving to others creates a flow of increasing wealth in one's life [49].

The importance of donation in the law of wealth is so great that some theorists believe that in order to attain one's desires in life, one must first be generous. This method yields miraculous results. Evidence for this has even been provided. Examples include the experiences of people who had great problems but took advantage of the stimulus of donation to drive the flow of wealth toward themselves [50]. Another objective piece of evidence for the results of the act of donation is the belief of tithe or tenth. Tithe in this sense means for a person to donate one tenth of their earnings to others. The source of this teaching is the Holy Bible. On this basis, many supporters of the act of donation believe that this percentage of donations leads to the highest returns. Canfield considers the tithe to be the greatest guarantee for becoming wealthy. He stresses that the wealthiest people in the world pay this tithe, and in this way,

they motivate the universal forces and pull a superabundance of blessings toward themselves [51]. Rhonda Byrne considers the tithe to be a sort of spiritual tax. She holds that payment of this tithe is the greatest thing anyone can do to bring even more money into their lives [52].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4. Comparison of the Effects of Donation in Islamic Teachings and the Law of Attraction

After examining the effects of donation in Islamic teachings and the law of attraction, the following similarities and differences have come to light.

4.1. Similarities

Both Islamic teachings and the law of attraction agree that giving to others has unquestionable effects in the life of the donor. Islamic teachings draw on Quranic verses and traditions to explicate the effects of donation, and the law of attraction emphasises these effects on the basis of the law of wealth acquisition. These two schools of thought consider the effect of donation to be return of wealth to the life of the benefactor, and that sometimes the extent of this wealth surpasses belief. In other words, these ideologies both affirm that donated wealth will be returned several times over. According to both persuasions, donations do more good to the

giver than the receiver since the giver's wealth increases significantly. Islamic teachings indicate that God guarantees the exponential return of donated wealth, and the law of attraction also guarantees such dividends.

4.2. Differences

According to Islamic teachings, a donation will only manifest its benefits in a person's life if he adheres to its conditions. These conditions include giving for God's satisfaction, giving free of negative effects for the receiver, giving in moderation, giving clean and desirable things, and giving in secret. However, the law of attraction is a humanistic ideology and as such, it does not propose any conditions for donation. It considers the desire of the person and their donation to be the method for enjoying the benefits of donations. Even so, some proponents of the law of attraction have realised that if they donate with the aim of following God's command, i.e. the tithe posited in the Bible, the effects of their donations will be greater, and they will be more successful in this regard.

Islam teaches that the good deed of donation involves not only worldly rewards, but also recompense in the next world. This increases the donor's motivation to give even more. Humans are eternal beings according to Islam,

and after death they will continue their life in the next world. How a person lives in the next world is directly related to the actions they perform in this world. The religion of Islam seeks the worldly and otherworldly happiness of human beings. On the other hand, the law of attraction only claims to bring happiness and wealth in the world. In this way, the extent of the effects for donation in the law of attraction is more limited than in Islamic teachings, and therefore the idea of donation in the law of attraction is much less effective. The motivation to give to others is also more powerful in Islam than the law of attraction.

Islam explains the extent of results for donation to others. This extent covers the replacement as well as the exponential returns on donated wealth. On the contrary, the law of attraction makes no mention of the extent of returns for donation. It only emphasises that giving to others is a motivating force for the circulation of wealth and leads to greater returns. Therefore, it can be stated that since the teaching of donation in Islam is clearer in terms of the amount of returns, it is superior to the law of attraction. In Islamic teachings, the manner in which donation affects one's life and the kind of worldly rewards remain ambiguous. Even though it is asserted that God guarantees the exponential return of wealth, the causes that lead to these returns in

a person's life are not mentioned. Conversely, advocates of the law of attraction allege that the answer to this unknown, i.e. the manner in which donations effect human lives, is the law of attraction. They assert that when a person donates money, she is emanating energy into the universe saying that 'I am very rich', and the effect of these positive energies is increased return of money. It can therefore be presumed that the law of attraction completes the puzzle of the returns on donation to others in Islamic teachings.

5. CONCLUSION

It has been shown that Islamic teachings and the law of attraction tell a similar story about the returns on donations in people's lives. Both ideologies emphasise that the effects of donation to others is the return of the cycle of wealth to the life of the donor. However, this issue has been discussed more comprehensively and completely in Islamic teachings compared with the law of attraction. Islam also explains the conditions, scope, and extent of the results of donation. Satisfaction of God is at the top of these conditions, and it plays a key role in realisation of the other conditions. The worldly and otherworldly scope as well as the extent of the effects of donation are also indicators of the superiority and greater effectiveness of donation in Islamic teachings. The law of attraction only

indicates the manner in which donations return. In accordance with the law of attraction, the act of donation is a motivating force for the circulation of wealth by attracting the positive energies of the universe. An important point is that Islamic teachings only leave out the manner in which donation returns into the lives of people, but the law of attraction seeks to explain the mechanism of this effect. Therefore, it may be that these two discourses complement each other.

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