

The Jurisprudential Applications of Voluntary Work in Islam

Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Suleiman Al-Salem¹

Abstract

Voluntary work has strong foundations in Islamic law and the same has been recognized by scholars of jurisprudence. The objective of this study is to emphasize the significance of voluntary work in Islam and demonstrate its practical applications in the field of jurisprudence. Using an inductive approach, the findings reveal that voluntary work is deeply embedded in Islam, as supported by references from the Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Furthermore, scholars of jurisprudence have established the legitimacy of voluntary work through various legal rulings and regulations across different aspects of jurisprudence. The findings recommend raising awareness about the importance of voluntary work in Islam and implementing its practice in contemporary societies.

Keywords: Charitable work, donation contracts, morality, volunteering, social behavior.

Introduction

The act of volunteering has a strong foundation in Islamic law and this evidences the status of Islam as a code of life. Whereas the most well-known form of volunteering is the obligatory zakat, scholars from different schools of Islamic jurisprudence have identified different types of social contracts that also translate to voluntary assistance to others, including trust, endowment, and benevolent loan, as well as those that amount to communal obligations that benefit others, such as caring for an abandoned child (Laqit), washing the dead (Ghusl Mayyit), and rescuing the distressed. These and other such rejoinders in Islam emphasize the significance of voluntary charitable work in Islamic law and the recognition it receives irrespective of the form, from scholars of Islamic jurisprudence.

Research problem

Volunteering has received great attention in Islam, with numerous rewards and virtues in this world and the one after, associated with it. This study focuses on highlighting the legislation of voluntary work according to scholars of the various Islamic schools of jurisprudence, as well as examining their legal interpretations and applications in this field.

Research objectives

1. To emphasize the significance of voluntary charitable work in the Islamic texts.
2. To highlight the legislative frameworks and jurisprudential applications of voluntary work according to scholars of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence.

¹ Assistant Professor of Jurisprudence, Department of Islamic Studies, College of Sciences and Arts in Mithnab, Qassim University, Mithnab, Saudi Arabia, Ab.alsalem@qu.edu.sa

3. To provide examples of voluntary work from the companions of the Prophet (PBUH).

Research Methodology

The study uses an inductive approach by collecting Islamic textual sources and the interpretations of scholars that shed light on the aspect of voluntary work in Islam. For the purpose of coherence, the study is divided into three sections following the introduction. The introduction provides an overview of the research topic, problem, objectives, and methodology. The first section highlights the importance of voluntary charitable work in the Islam. The second section gives examples of voluntary work from amongst the companions of the Prophet (PBUH). The legal and jurisprudential applications of voluntary charitable work according to scholars from the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence are shown in the third section.

The importance of voluntary charitable work in the Islamic faith

The Islamic texts, including the Quran and Sunnah, contain numerous references to the virtues of doing good to others, encouraging kindness towards them, relieving their burdens, alleviating their sorrows, guiding the lost, teaching the ignorant, guiding the lost to the right path, and other acts of benevolence. Here are some examples of such texts:

1: The Holy Quran

Allah the Almighty says in Surah Al-Hajj, verse 77: "O believers! Bow down, prostrate yourselves, worship your Lord, and do 'what is' good so that you may be successful." This verse is general in its reference to different types of good deeds, thereby including kindness, righteousness, welfare of others, speaking well, and being compassionate to people (Al-Khazin, 2004).

In Surah An-Nisa, Allah, the Almighty says: "There is no good in most of their secret talks—except those encouraging charity, kindness, or reconciliation between people. And whoever does this seeking Allah's pleasure, We will grant them a great reward." (4:114). This verse is explained by what is narrated by Abu Darda about the importance of reconciling relationships. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Shall I not inform you of something more excellent in degree than fasting, prayer and almsgiving (sadaqah)? The people replied: Yes, Prophet of Allah! He said: It is putting things right between people (Sunan Abi Dawud, 4/432).

Allah, the Almighty also mentioned the voluntary work of Dhul-Qarnayn, which went beyond benefiting himself and was praised. Dhul-Qarnayn built a barrier to protect people from the harm of Gog and Magog. "They pleaded, "O Zul-Qarnain! Surely Gog and Magog¹ are spreading corruption throughout the land. Should we pay you tribute provided that you build a wall between us and them?" He responded, "What my Lord has provided for me is far better. But assist me with resources, and I will build a barrier between you and them" (18: 94-95). Thus was established the foundations of physically protecting the weak.

Al-Saadi (2007) said: "He responded to their request because it was beneficial, and he did not take any compensation from them. He thanked his Lord for enabling him and giving him the ability, and said to them: "What my Lord has provided for me is far better" (18: 95), in one stroke he, thus, not only showed his gratitude to the Lord, but also, his complete and selfless dedication to the welfare of his brethren.

Allah blessed his volunteer, and it benefited countless others, so large a number, that only Allah knows their number. This was indicated by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) regarding the impact of the dam built by Dhul-Qarnayn. Zainab bint Jahsh reported that the Prophet (PBUH) entered upon her in a state of fear and said, " None has the right to

be worshipped but Allah. Woe unto the Arabs from a danger that has come near. An opening has been made in the wall of Gog and Magog like this," making a circle with his thumb and index finger. Zainab bint Jahsh said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! Shall we be destroyed even though there are pious persons among us?" He said, "Yes, when the evil will increase" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3346; Sahih Muslim, 7416). This shows that Dhul-Qarnayn provided a service to humanity by preventing this evil from causing harm, stemming its growth by his intervention.

The verses that may be quoted in support of volunteerism in Islam are numerous, and they are centered around the encouragement of Allah for believers to generously participate cooperatively in acts of righteousness. Allah says in Surah Al-Ma'idah, "Cooperate with one another in goodness and righteousness, and do not cooperate in sin and transgression."(5:2). Allah also informs us that contribution equal to the weight of even a mustard seed in goodness will be accounted for, as mentioned in Surah Az-Zalzalah, "So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it" (99:7). This verse alone is sufficient to motivate one to do good, no matter how small or inconsequential it may appear. It is a comprehensive and impactful verse, as the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) referred to it as such (Sahih al-Bukhari 4678; Sahih Muslim, 2337).

Secondly: The Prophetic Sunnah

Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the ultimate embodiment in every act of goodness. He exerted himself in serving the interests of creation, calling them to goodness, and showing concern for them. Allah described himself in Surah At-Tawbah, "There certainly has come to you a messenger from among yourselves. He is concerned by your suffering, anxious for your well-being, and gracious and merciful to the believers." (9: 128). His wife, Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) also described him during his first revelation and mentioned various aspects of his benevolent actions. She said: "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3; Sahih Muslim 160).

The meaning of "keep good relations with your kith and kin" is to carry the weight of their difficulties. The word *kal* in Arabic means weight, as mentioned in Surah An-Nahl, "He is a burden on his master" (16:76). Bearing the burden of the weak includes spending on the needy, orphans, relative, and others. It is a form of generosity and selflessness, which is known as *kallal* in Arabic and means to give until one becomes exhausted (Al-Nawawi, 1392 AH).

The phrase to "help the poor and the destitute" means using one's wealth or resources for those who are in need. It can refer to giving donations or providing others with what they cannot find elsewhere, such as valuable advice or noble virtues. It can also mean earning a great amount of wealth that others are unable to, and then, generously using it for acts of goodness and charitable purposes (Al-Nawawi, 1392 AH).

"And you serve your guests generously " means to provide hospitality and attend to the needs of the guest. It can refer to hosting them and making them feel welcomed, or offering them food and accommodation (Al-Nawawi, 1392 AH).

"And you assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones" means providing support and help in difficult situations. The term *nawa'ib* refers to unexpected or unforeseen circumstances that may befall suddenly. It encompasses both addressing immediate needs and anticipating potential challenges (Al-Asqalani, 1390 AH; Al-Nawawi, 1392 AH).

Ibn Hajar commented on Khadijah's description of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and said that she described him as being decorated with fundamental virtues of good character, because acts of kindness can be shown to both relatives and strangers, through physical or financial means, to those who are dependent or independent. All these aspects are included in her description of Him (Al-Asqalani, 1390 AH).

Aisha was once asked about the Prophet's prayer at the end of his life and whether he used to pray sitting down. She replied, "Yes, after the people had worn him out." (Sahih Muslim 732). This means that due to the weight of the people's affairs and concerns, and the effort he put into looking after their interests, he became an old man (Al-Nawawi, 1392 AH).

This is part of the Prophet's (PBUH) actual actions. As for his sayings, they include:

1- Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "There is a (compulsory) Sadaqa (charity) to be given for every joint of the human body (as a sign of gratitude to Allah) every day that the sun rises. To judge justly between two persons is regarded as Sadaqa, and to help a man concerning his riding animal by helping him to ride it or by lifting his luggage on to it, is also regarded as Sadaqa, and (saying) a good word is also Sadaqa, and every step taken on one's way to offer the compulsory prayer (in the mosque) is also Sadaqa and to remove a harmful thing from the way is also Sadaqa." (Sahih Muslim 2382).

2- In the prophet's words, "Sadaqa (charity) is to be given for every day the sun rises." Ibn Rajab explained that this means that charity is due from every part of the human body every day of their life in this world. It is known that this charity is required from a person every day they live in this world (Ibn Rajab, 1412 AH), there is no denying it as it is an obligatory act of thanksgiving.

3- Alsulama is originally used to refer to the bones of the fingers and the rest of the palm, later it was used to refer to all the bones and joints of the body (Al-Nawawi, 1392 AH).

4- As for the meaning of the hadith, it indicates that the composition and well-being of these bones are among the greatest blessings of Allah upon His servant. Therefore, each bone requires a charity (Sadaqah) to be given by the son of Adam on its behalf, as a form of gratitude for this blessing. Performing the two rak'ahs of Duha prayer (forenoon prayer) suffices as a substitute for this entire charity, because in prayer, all the organs are utilized in obedience and worship, thus it is sufficient in expressing gratitude for the well-being of these organs (Ibn Rajab, 1412 AH).

5- As narrated by Abu Dharr, and its chain of transmission authenticated by Al-Albani in Al-Silsilah Al-Sahih (2/115) No. (575), the Prophet (PBUH) said: "There is no person except that upon them is a charity every day that the sun rises." It was asked, "O Messenger of Allah, from where can we give charity when we are poor?" He (PBUH) said: "The doors of good deeds are many: saying SubhanAllah (glory be to Allah), Alhamdulillah (praise be to Allah), Allahu Akbar (Allah is the greatest), La ilaha illallah (there is no god but Allah), enjoining good, forbidding evil, removing harmful things from the road, listening to the deaf, guiding the blind, showing the way to the lost, and helping the helpless. are all considered as charity on your behalf towards yourself." (Sahih Ibn Hibban 3377).

6- Ibn Rajab said: "The poor thought that charity could only be given with money, and they were unable to do so. The Prophet (PBUH) informed them that all kinds of good deeds and acts of kindness are considered as charity. As for non-monetary charity, there are two types: the first is any act of kindness towards others, which is considered as charity for them. Sometimes, this type of charity is better than giving money, such as enjoining good and forbidding evil. This is because it is a call to obey Allah and to refrain from sins, which leads to greater good than monetary benefit. Similarly, teaching beneficial knowledge, reciting the Qur'an, removing harm from the road, striving to bring benefit to people and warding off harm from them, as well as supplicating for Muslims and seeking forgiveness for them are all considered as charity. The second type of non-monetary charity is any act that benefits only the doer, such as various forms of remembrance, including saying Allahu Akbar (Allah is the greatest), SubhanAllah (glory

be to Allah), Alhamdulillah (praise be to Allah), La ilaha illallah (there is no god but Allah), seeking forgiveness, and walking to the mosque." (Ibn Rajab, 1412 AH).

7- Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: " I saw a person enjoying himself in Paradise because of the tree that he cut from the path which was a source of inconvenience to the people". (Sahih Muslim 160).

8- Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: " The one who looks after a widow or a poor person is like a Mujahid (warrior) who fights for Allah's Cause, or like him who performs prayers all the night and fasts all the day." (Sahih al-Bukhari 5353; Sahih Muslim 1914).

9- Abu Hurairah also reported that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: "While a man walks along a path, finds a thorny twig lying on the way and puts it aside, Allah would appreciate it and forgive him." (Sahih Muslim 7659).

Discussion

Voluntary charitable work according to the four schools of thought

Islamic jurists divide contracts in people's transactions into two categories: contracts of exchange, and contracts of attachment. Contracts of exchange include buying, selling, renting, and partnership. Contracts of attachment include gifts, donations, wills, loans, and others. Therefore, we find Islamic scholars, including Hadith scholars and jurists, mentioning several voluntary acts, and to determine their legislation, regulations, and rulings, for example:

1- A chapter was dedicated to the rulings of 'Agency'. According to the Hanafi school of thought, agency is defined as "establishing someone else in one's place to carry out permissible transactions." The Maliki school defines it as "delegating a person with the right to act on behalf of another." The Shafi'i school defines it as "authorizing a person to perform actions on behalf of another that can be delegated during their lifetime." The Hanbali school it as "appointing a person who is capable of carrying out transactions to act on behalf of another." (Ibn Abidin, 1966; Alhitab, 1992; Al-Mardawi, 1984; Al-Ramli, 1984). In all these schools of thought, the commonality lies in the underlying volunteer work when activation of agency is without compensation or reward.

2- A chapter was dedicated to explaining the rulings of the Wadi'ah, which is "the money deposited with someone for safekeeping without compensation." (Al-Buhuti, 1968; Al-Maliki, 1994; Al-Nawawi, 1991; Al-Zailai, 1955). This is a voluntary act of safeguarding someone's money until they retrieve it.

3- A chapter was dedicated to explaining the rulings of Luqatah, which is "a lost property is found by someone else." Whoever finds it is obligated to safeguard it and make efforts to identify its owner. This too, is without compensation (Al-Kasani, 1328 AH; Al-Maliki, 1994; Al-Mardawi, 1984; Al-Sherbini, 1994).

4- A chapter was also dedicated to the rulings of Al-Laqt, which refers to "the abandoned child found on the roadside, whose lineage and identity are unknown." In this case, a Muslim may voluntarily take the child, care for them, and provide them with proper upbringing (Al-Buhuti, 1968; Al-Kharshi, 1994; Al-Nawawi, 1991; Al-Sarakhsi, 1994). In Muslim countries, it is common for families to adopt such children out of compassion.

5- They also highlighted a chapter to the rulings of loans, which is "providing money to someone who benefits from it and returns it in exchange." (Al-Buhuti, 1968; Al-Haskafi, 2002; Ibn al-Malqan, 1406 AH). The jurists also mentioned the virtue of a good loan and its extension on Muslims. It is based on the tenets of donation

and benevolence, unlike usury that is based on materialism and exploitation of the needs of the needy.

6- They also set a chapter to the rulings of gifts, which is "transferring ownership of property during one's lifetime without compensation"(Al-Buhuti,1968; Al-Jundi, 2005; Al-Mardawi, 1984; Al-Zailai, 1955). It includes similar terms for voluntarily giving of money or assets during one's lifetime as gifts.

7- A chapter was prepared to discuss the rules and regulations regarding wills. A will allows for the transfer of ownership of property after death through donation (Ibn Nujaym, 2013; Al-Mardawi, 1984; Al-Shirbini, 2014). The acts of kindness and generosity are not limited to one's lifetime, as they can be extended through endowments and wills even when one departs this world. By making a will, a person can continue to perform acts of kindness even after their passing by donating from their remaining wealth.

8- One example of voluntary charitable work in Islam is the competition among Muslims to fulfill their obligation of community welfare services. This encompasses various acts such as caring for abandoned children, promoting good deeds, preventing evil, performing funeral rites for the deceased, rescuing those in danger, assisting the poor and needy, and more. These acts are considered obligatory for individuals if there is no one else available to carry them out, and they are done without expecting any form of reward in return.

9- In addition to the obligations of voluntary charitable work in Islam, there are also rights that every Muslim has over their fellow Muslims, which are guaranteed by Islam and explicitly mentioned in the texts. These include visiting the sick, attending funerals, and other similar acts that bring benefit to the community, such as offering prayers for the sick and bringing joy to the patient, or comforting and supporting the bereaved family.

We have thus highlighted the shining examples of the legislative aspects of voluntary work in Islamic jurisprudence.

Examples of volunteer work among the Companions, may God be pleased with them.

The Prophet (PBUH) was able to raise a generation of companions, in whom the scientific application of the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah was evident, in wonderful images and examples of performing good deeds and competing to accomplish them, some of which I hereby mention:

1- As narrated by Jarir ibn Abdullah Al-Bajali, the story of the two men from the Ansar is as follows: The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Some donated a dinar, others a dirham, still others clothes, some donated a sa' of wheat, some a sa' of dates; till he (the Holy Prophet) said: (Bring) even if it is half a date. Then a person from among the Ansar came there with a money bag which his hands could scarcely lift; in fact, they could not (lift). Then the people followed continuously, till I saw two heaps of eatables and clothes, and I saw the face of the Messenger (PBUH) glistening like gold (on account of joy). The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: He who sets a good precedent in Islam, there is a reward for him for this (act of goodness) and reward of that also who acted according to it subsequently, without any deduction from their rewards; and he who sets in Islam an evil precedent, there is upon him the burden of that, and the burden of him also who acted upon it subsequently, without any deduction from their burden" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3346). Here is a group picturization of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) as they respond to his call, donating whatever they could of their wealth and food to those in need. They follow, nay compete with, each other in giving generously, embodying the spirit of voluntary work and selflessness in Islam.

2- Abu Hurairah narrated that a man came to the Prophet (PBUH) and he sent a message to his wives saying, "A man came to the Prophet. The Prophet (PBUH) sent a messenger to his wives (to bring something for that man to eat) but they said that they had nothing except water. Then Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "Who will take this (person) or entertain him as a guest?" An Ansari man said, "I." So he took him to his wife and said to her, "Entertain generously the guest of Allah's Messenger (PBUH)." She said, "We have got nothing except the meals of my children." He said, "Prepare your meal, light your lamp and let your children sleep if they ask for supper." So she prepared her meal, lighted her lamp and made her children sleep, and then stood up pretending to mend her lamp, but she put it off. Then both of them pretended to be eating, but they really went to bed hungry. In the morning the Ansari went to Allah's Messenger (PBUH) who said, "Tonight Allah laughed or wondered at your action." Then Allah revealed: "They give 'the emigrants' preference over themselves even though they may be in need. And whoever is saved from the selfishness of their own souls, it is they who are 'truly' successful." (59.9) (Sahih al-Bukhari 1382; Sahih Muslim 3587).

3- This is a story about the Caliph Umar (MABPWH). He went out in the middle of the night and Talhah saw him. Umar went into one house and then another. When morning came, Talhah went to the second house and saw a blind old woman sitting there. He asked her, "What is this man doing for you?" She replied, "He has been taking care of me for some time now. He brings me what I need and protects me from harm." Talhah said to himself, "May your mother lose you, O Talhah! Are you following Umar's footsteps?" (Al-Isfahani, 1974).

4- The story of Uthman (MABPWH) preparing the army of Usrah is as follows: Abdur Rahman ibn Samurah narrated, "Uthman went to the Prophet (PBUH) with one-thousand Dinar" - Al-Hasan bin Waqi (one of the narrators) said: "And in another place in my book: 'In his garment when the 'army of distress' was being prepared. So he poured them into his lap.'" 'Abdur-Rahman said: "So I saw the Prophet (PBUH) turning them over in his lap, saying: 'Whatever Uthman does after today will not harm him,' two times." (Jami` at-Tirmidhi, 3701).

5- One of the famous women in charitable volunteer work was Zainab bint Jahsh, one of the wives of the Prophet (PBUH). The Prophet (PBUH) said about her, "One who has the longest hands amongst you would meet me most immediately. They (the wives of Allah's Apostle) used to measure the hands as to whose hand was the longest and it was the hand of Zainab that was the longest amongst them, as she used to work with her hand and Spend (that income) on charity." (Sahih Muslim 6443). This highlights the importance of generosity and helping others in Islam, as well as the recognition of women's contributions in this regard.

6- Aisha, another wife of the Prophet (PBUH), described Zainab as the best woman in terms of religion, saying, "I have never seen a woman who was better in religious commitment than Zainab, more fearing of Allah, more honest in speech, more dutiful in upholding the ties of kinship, more generous in giving charity, and devoted in giving of herself in acts of charity, by means of which she sought to draw closer to Allah" (Sahih Muslim 6443). This shows that Zainab was not only generous but also, devoted to her faith and dedicated to helping others, which are equally important values in Islam.

Thus, the righteous predecessors were amongst the Companions and Followers and those who followed them in goodness were quick to do good deeds and embodied this in practical life. The autobiographies and biographies of these great people are a virtual procession of faith and luminous rides moving through time on the paths of voluntary charitable work.

By the grace and blessings of Allah, the nations that embrace Islam are blessed. Even in the contemporary times, the inclination for charitable work is deeply rooted in the hearts of those good people that move forward on the path shown by the prophet (PBUH) with

faith, certainty, and hope.

It is notable that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia places great emphasis on charitable work, as evidenced by its inclusion of charity as a mandated obligation in the Basic Law of Governance. This commitment is a unique model that sets it apart from contemporary and historical constitutions (Al-Zaid, 2019). As stated in the Basic Law of Governance ((Article Twenty-Seven: The state guarantees the rights of the citizen and his family in cases of emergency, illness, disability, and old age, supports the social security system, and encourages institutions and individuals to contribute to charitable work)).

Conclusion

The key findings and recommendations are as follows:

- 1- Voluntary work is deeply rooted in Islam, as evidenced by the teachings of the Quran and the practices of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
- 2- Islamic jurists have provided a solid foundation for voluntary work through the establishment of legislation and regulations in various areas of Islamic jurisprudence.
- 3- The companions of the Prophet (PBUH) serve as exemplary models of voluntary work, demonstrating its importance and impact. For emulation by contemporary societies.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends raising awareness about the significance of voluntary work in Islam, particularly in contemporary times where materialism prevails. It is crucial to highlight that Islam is a religion of compassion and benevolence, emphasizing the importance of engaging in voluntary acts of service, which shall ensure the doer of peace and joy in this world and hereafter.

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