

CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY AMONGST SMEs: A DIVINE COMMAND THEORY PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Over the last three decades, the expected role of business in society has grown tremendously, with businesses now required to cater for the interests of several stakeholders, from employees to consumers, from shareholders to law makers, and even the environment as well. An important component of a company's CSR is Corporate Philanthropy. The majority of scholarship on corporate philanthropy has focused on the charitable activities of large corporations. There has been very little scholarship on enhancing our understanding about the engagement of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in corporate philanthropy, despite the fact they constitute the bulk of business enterprises worldwide. This paper sought to address the scholarship gap by discussing corporate philanthropy of SMEs from an Islamic perspective. It addressed the following critical issues relating to the corporate philanthropy of SMEs: Why give?, What to give?, Who to give?, and How to give?

Keywords: Corporate Philanthropy, SMEs, Islamic perspective

INTRODUCTION

In days gone by, the role of businesses in society used to be quite narrow: make profit for shareholders. In those days, the famous mantra "the business of business is business" widely attributed to renowned economist Milton Friedman (1962) reigned supreme. However, over the last three decades, the expected role of business in society has grown tremendously, with businesses now required to cater for the interests of several stakeholders, from employees to consumers, from shareholders to law makers, and even the environment as well. This enlarged role of business in society is holistically called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Matten and Moon, 2008; Preuss *et al.*, 2009; Hollerer, 2013).

An important component of a company's CSR is Corporate Philanthropy. "Corporate Philanthropy is the act of a corporation or business promoting the welfare of others, generally via charitable donations of funds or time" (Ehrlich, 2013). Corporate philanthropic activities are seen to complement the public sector's efforts in providing vital services to the populace of the community.

Additionally, these charitable efforts help many causes such as research for finding cures of diseases, programs to help the disabled and many other worthwhile programs (Porter and Kramer, 2002; Mutsigwa, 2009; Ojo, 2009).

The majority of scholarship on corporate philanthropy has focused on the charitable activities of large corporations. There has been very little scholarship on enhancing our understanding about the engagement of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in corporate philanthropy, despite the fact they constitute the bulk of business enterprises worldwide (Coppa, & Sriramesh, 2013; Inyang, 2013).

This paper seeks to address the scholarship gap by discussing corporate philanthropy of SMEs from a Divine Command Theory perspective. The Divine Command Theory (DCT) states that the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by the commands of God (Wierenga, 1983; Barcalow, 1997; Dhooge, 2011). An entrepreneur's faith has been shown to influence how he engages in business activities, including corporate philanthropy. The principles of his faith shape his priorities, and often makes him view his business as an instrument to improve the welfare of people through philanthropy, rather than merely as a means of making profit (Du, 2015). Specifically, the DCT is applied in this paper from a wholly Islamic perspective, addressing the following critical issues relating to the corporate philanthropy of SMEs: Why give?, What to give?, Who to give?, and How to give?. These questions will be answered with evidence from Noble Qur'an, the *Ahadith* of the Noble Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him [PBUH]), and Yusuf Ali's scholarly commentary of the Noble Qur'an that has been revised and edited by The Presidency of Islamic Researches, IFTA, Call and Guidance (a council of Islamic scholars in Saudi Arabia). It is hoped that the result of these discussions will be a concise and straightforward guide for all Muslim SMEs on how to maximize their philanthropic efforts in order to achieve success in this life and the eternal life Hereafter.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In keeping with the theme of the paper, the corporate philanthropy scholarship reviewed is presented in four streams addressing the four critical questions regarding corporate philanthropy: Why give?, What to give?, How to give? and Who to give?.

Why give?

The main focus of the papers reviewed in this section was to provide a better understanding of businesses' motivations for engaging in corporate

philanthropy. Enhancing the firm's reputation was identified as one of the main motivations for SMEs philanthropy. Simply put, public display of charitable endeavours by SMEs would make them look good in the eyes of the public and hopefully lead to greater sales (Khan, Haider & Shah, 2011; Morris, Bartkus, Glassman & Rhiel, 2013; Szócs, Schlegelmilch, Rusch, & Shamma, 2014; Pelóza, Merz, & Chen, 2015; Pelóza, Hassay & Hudson, 2015).

Closely linked with the enhancement of company reputation as a motivation for corporate philanthropy is the recruitment of quality employees. Businesses that engage in corporate philanthropy for this reason hope that highly-qualified people would be attracted by the business' charitable efforts and would view such a business as an ideal place to work. Higher quality employees leads to higher quality products and services which leads to improved business performance (Coppa & Sriramesh, 2013; Inyang, 2013; Burbano, 2014; Duarte, Gomes & Das Neves, 2014; Hartig, 2014)

Another reason why businesses engaged in corporate philanthropy was to gain political favour, particularly by encouraging politicians to push forward favourable policies that will enhance the company's business interests. This was particularly true for industries that tend to be controversial, such as tobacco, alcohol and firearms industries (Sanchez, 2000; Fooks & Gilmore, 2013; Arin, 2014; Li, Song & Wu, 2014; Du, 2015).

A fourth reason why businesses engage in corporate philanthropy is moral motivation. Basically, business owners and managers engage in charitable giving simply because their internal principles or faith imposes upon them a moral obligation to do so. Engaging in corporate philanthropy thus becomes a means of fulfilling one's moral goals (Frederiksen, 2010; Hannington, 2010; Baden, Meyer & Tonne, 2011; Kjaergaard & Morsing, 2013; Köllen, 2015). This moral motivation is closely in line with the theme of this paper.

What to give?

In this section of the review, the focus was on identifying from the literature, the primary forms of corporate philanthropy that business' have engaged in. Three main forms of charitable philanthropy were identified as follows:

1. Cash donations: These represent the major form of corporate philanthropy, with companies giving cash to identified beneficiaries such as non-profit organizations, Art centres, educational institutions and medical research institutions. These donations are given directly to these institutions by the company or indirectly through the company's charitable foundation (Seifert, et

al., 2003; Canny, 2014; Cantrell et al., 2014; Holmes, 2015; Maple & Civera, 2015).

2. Product donations (gift-in-kind): In this case, businesses donate products to beneficiaries who need them. Primarily, these products are those manufactured by the business itself; for example, a business that manufactures computers donating some computers to a local high school. However, these products can be those that the chosen beneficiary needs that the business does not manufacture; for example a computer business might decide to buy and donate much needed medical equipment to a local hospital (Bond et al., 2014; Gazley & Abner, 2014; Mandina et al., 2014; Lee, 2015; Sunitha & Edward, 2015).

3. Employee Volunteering: In this form of corporate philanthropy, employees of a company give some of their time and expertise to engage in voluntary charitable efforts targeted at specific beneficiaries. Companies usually institutionalize this concept by setting up Employee Volunteer Programs (EVPs) defined as "planned, managed effort that seeks to motivate and enable employees to effectively serve community needs through the leadership of the employer" (Seven Practices of Effective Employee Volunteer Programs, 2013, p2). The objectives of EVPs are to improve community-business relations, and provide employees with a sense of service, and enhanced leadership and professional skills (Jones, 2010; Basil, 2011; Teague & Peterson, 2011; Siddhartha & Priyanka, 2012; Green et al., 2012).

How to give?

In this section, the focus was to shed light on the manner in which businesses engage in corporate philanthropy: publicly or anonymously?.

Benabou & Tirole (2010, p3) provide the answer to the question posed above as follows: "*Anonymous donations are widely considered to be most admirable, and yet they typically represent at most 1% of the total*". This statistic is unsurprising considering that the motivation for most acts of corporate philanthropy is to gain strategic benefits such as improved sales and better community-business relationships. Perhaps what was most interesting was that the few papers that advocated the benefits of businesses engaging in anonymous philanthropy adopted a religious worldview, with the primary motivation being the receipt of God's pleasure ([Christian perspective: Hayes, 2011; MacGregor & Kent, 2011; McVicar, 2011; Anand & Hayling, 2014; Beckner et al., 2014], [Islamic perspective: Rudich, 2009; Selvik, 2013; Hasan, 2015; Huber, 2015; Osella et al., 2015]).

Who to give?

The focus of this section was to highlight the main recipients of corporate philanthropic activities identified in the literature. Five main recipients were identified:

- 1) Non-profit organizations (Griffin, 2004; Dennis et al., 2007; Patel, 2009; Maon et al., 2015; Schlegelmilch & Szöcs, 2015)
- 2) Projects that support the arts (Stead, 1985; Cobb, 1996; Levy, 1999; Leclair & Gordon, 2000; Werbel & Carter, 2002)
- 3) Educational institutions (Harriman, 1953; Cho, 2009; Liket & Simaens, 2015; Masulis & Reza, 2015; Zhou, 2015)
- 4) Medical research (Cahane & Malone, 1995; Sanipe, 2005; Melhado, 2006; Hinds & Weaver, 2015; Mohan, 2015)
- 5) Community welfare organizations (Carson & Carson, 2003; Spackman et al., 2010; O'Connor & Shumate, 2010; Ali, 2015; Paarlberg & Yoshioka, 2015)

ISLAMIC CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY

In this section, we address the four key issues relating to Islamic corporate philanthropy: why give?, what to give?, how to give?, and who to give?. Evidence from Islam's two primary sources of guidance, the Noble Qur'an and *Ahadith* of the Noble Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are provided to answer these critical questions.

Why Give?

In this section, this paper seeks to address two issues regarding Islamic corporate philanthropy: 1) What should the motivation be for Muslim business owners in engaging in philanthropic efforts?, and 2) What are the benefits of giving?.

Motivation for giving

For all Muslims, businesspeople or otherwise, the sole motivation to do any deed is seeking the pleasure of the Most Merciful Allah as clearly indicated in the following verse of the Noble Qur'an: *Say: "Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds"* (Al- an'am: 162). Additionally, when doing any deed, the Muslim must ensure that it is in line with the *Sunnah* (sayings and practices) of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

When engaging in charitable activities, the Muslim businessperson must take extreme care to ensure that no other motive creeps into his or her heart; Of particular danger is the motive of showing off. This impure motive is called *riya* in Islam and has the disastrous effect of destroying any rewards one might have obtained whilst engaging in charity. Allah, the Most Wise, warns Muslim businesspersons of this in the following verse: *O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders or injury as does one who spends his wealth [only] to be seen by the people and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day. His example is like that of a [large] smooth stone upon which is dust and is hit by a downpour that leaves it bare. They are unable [to keep] anything of what they have earned. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people* (Al-Baqarah: 264).

Benefits of giving

The Muslim Businessperson or woman is promised many benefits by Almighty Allah and His Noble Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) if they engage in sincere corporate philanthropy. Some of these benefits are discussed as follows:

1. Removal of past sins and earning Allah's Mercy

If you disclose your charitable expenditures, they are good; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you, and He will remove from you some of your misdeeds [thereby]. And Allah, with what you do, is [fully] Acquainted (Al-Baqarah: 271). Allah also says: *So establish regular Prayer and give regular charity; and obey the Messenger; that ye may receive mercy* (an-Noor: 56).

For the Muslim businessperson, the removal of misdeeds as a reward for giving charity is extremely valuable. This is because the ultimate goal of every Muslim is Paradise, and only those who Allah, the Most Merciful, has mercy upon will enter Paradise. The purification by Allah of a person's sins is one of the greatest signs of His Mercy. This is evidenced by the following *hadith* narrated by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him): *There is none whose deeds alone would entitle him to get into Paradise. It was said to him: And, Allah's Messenger, not even you? Thereupon he said: Not even I, but that my Lord wraps me in Mercy* (Sahih Muslim, Book 52, Hadith 56).

2. Multiplication of Wealth

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And

Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing (al Baqarah: 261).

The verse above promises a 700% return on every charitable donation given sincerely for the sake of Allah. This shows that even from a purely monetary perspective, it makes perfect business sense for Muslim businesses to engage in sincere corporate philanthropy. This incredible return on investment is guaranteed by One who always fulfils his promise, if only we had complete faith in His promise: “*O Mankind, indeed the promise of Allah is true...*” (Al-Fatir: 5).

3. Evidence of a person's righteousness

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces Towards east or West; but it is righteousness – to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allah-fearing (Al-Baqarah: 177).

In Islam, Paradise is the ultimate goal for all Muslims, and righteousness in this life is an integral pre-requisite for those honoured by All-Merciful Allah to be amongst its inhabitants. From the verse above, it can be observed that giving of charity is mentioned twice amongst the qualities of the righteous. This should serve as a great incentive for Muslim businesses to give sincerely in charity.

4. Freedom from fear and grief

Those who (in charity) spend of their goods by night and by day, in secret and in public, have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve (Al-Baqarah: 274).

From a material sense, the more charity a Muslim business gives, the less money it has at its disposal in terms of dollars and cents at that point in time. However, from the more important spiritual perspective, instead of impoverishing the Muslim businessperson, sincere charity enriches the soul of the Muslim, and thus he or she has more happiness and less fear (The Holy Qur-an: English translation of the meanings and Commentary, p126).

5. Securing one's eternal life Hereafter

Speak to my servants who have believed, that they may establish regular prayers, and spend (in charity) out of the sustenance we have given them, secretly and openly, before the coming of a Day in which there will be neither mutual bargaining nor befriending (Ibrahim: 31).

As Muslims, we view this earthly life as our temporary abode; a life of probation where we are tested by Allah to see how obedient we are to His commands. Our real life is our eternal life to come, and our task in this life is to prepare for our eternal life by doing good deeds and avoiding evil deeds. By engaging in sincere charity, the Muslim businessperson helps to secure his or her eternal life in Paradise before the Great Day of Reckoning comes to pass, when a person's wealth will be of no value. The most sensible Muslim businessperson engages in sincere philanthropy now to secure the "treasures in Paradise" (The Holy Qur-an: English translation of the meanings and Commentary, p701).

6. Earning a great reward

Believe in Allah and His messenger, and spend (in charity) out of the (substance) whereof He has made you heirs. For, those of you who believe and spend (in charity),- for them is a great Reward (Al-Hadid: 7).

We would like to point out that the All-Powerful Creator of the universe has used the word "great" in describing the reward for those who believe and practice charity. It is beyond our imagination just how magnificent such a reward would be. This hope of receiving such an awesome reward is more than enough incentive for the Muslim businessperson to engage in sincere philanthropy. This is what is called "enlightened self-interest".

7. Avoiding the pangs of regret at the point of death

And spend something (in charity) out of the substance which We have bestowed on you, before Death should come to any of you and he should say, "O my Lord! why didst Thou not give me respite for a little while? I should then have given (largely) in charity, and I should have been one of the doers of good" (Al-Munafiqoon: 10).

Procrastination is one of the tools which the devil uses to prevent Muslims from doing good. The Muslim businessperson is warned against this danger, and is encouraged to engage in sincere philanthropy immediately before the inevitable event of death overtakes him or her and it is then too late to engage in such good works. "Every present moment calls urgently for its good

deed" (The Holy Qur-an: English translation of the meanings and Commentary, p1753).

8. Allah's shade on the difficult Day of Resurrection

The Noble Quran warns mankind in several verses of the many difficulties of the inevitable Day of Resurrection. *True sovereignty, that Day, is for the Most Merciful. And it will be upon the disbelievers a difficult Day (Al-Furqan: 26). If you, disbelieve, how will you be able to protect yourselves from the hardships of the day which would even turn children grey-headed? (Al-Muzzammil: 17).*

In a long *hadith* narrated by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Noble Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) tells us that on the Day of Resurrection, the sun will be brought near the people's head and that they will suffer severe pain and anguish as a result (Sahih Muslim, Book 1, *Hadith* 388). However, in another long *hadith* narrated again by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Blessed Prophet (PBUH) tells us of seven groups of people that will be saved from the heat of this sun and the difficulties of this day, and enjoy Allah's shade on that day when there will be no other shade. One of these seven groups is "*a man who gives charitable gifts so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given (i.e. nobody knows how much he has given in charity)*" (Sahih Bukhari, Book 11, *Hadith* 629). Considering the unbearable difficulties of the Day of Resurrection, the Muslim businessperson should be incredibly motivated to engage in corporate philanthropy sincerely and secretly to those most in need.

9. Protection from calamity

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: *Give charity without delay, for it stands in the way of calamity* (Jami' At-Tirmidhi, *Hadith* 589). The Muslim businessperson should not hoard his or her excess wealth, but should engage in charitable endeavours without delay so as to benefit the society as well as protect himself or herself from calamity.

10. Protection from Hell

Perhaps the most terrifying concern for every Muslim is ending up in the horrible and excruciating torment of Hell for even a moment. Engaging in charitable endeavours is a way a Muslim businessperson can help protect himself or herself from this terrible fate as we learn from the following *hadith* narrated by Adi bin Hatim (may Allah be pleased with him): *The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Save yourself from hell-fire even by giving half a date-fruit in charity"* (Sahih Bukhari, Book 24, *Hadith* 498).

WHAT TO GIVE?

For Muslim business owners, there are two types of philanthropic activities they can engage in: the first is obligatory, and the second is voluntary. The obligatory charity is technically called *Zakat*, whilst the voluntary charity is called *Sadaqat*.

For cash donations, *Zakat* is 2.5% of a business' income that is above a minimum amount called the *nisab* (there is a difference of opinion amongst scholars as to the exact amount that constitutes the *nisab*). *Zakat* is also to be paid on agricultural produce, livestock, precious metals and minerals at a rate varying between 2.5% and 20%, depending on the type of goods. It is the responsibility of every Muslim businessperson to seek knowledge from Islamic scholars regarding his or her *Zakat* responsibilities as it is amongst the five pillars of Islam (Dhar, 2013).

As mentioned above, the amounts for *Zakat* are fixed, but *Sadaqat* is left to the discretion of the Muslim businessperson. However, the Noble Quran does provide some guidelines on what should be given as voluntary charity in the following verse: "...*And they ask you what they should spend. Say, 'The excess [beyond needs]'. Thus Allah makes clear to you the verses of Revelation that you might give thought*" (Al-Baqarah: 219). For the Muslim businessperson, he or she must ensure that all the business' expenses necessary to keep it operational and thriving are taken care of. If there is money left over, then charitable endeavours can be engaged in.

Whether a Muslim businessperson wishes to discharge his or her *Zakat* obligations or simply to give *Sadaqat*, an absolutely vital criterion for the acceptance of such charity by Almighty Allah is the source of such income; it must have been earned in a way that has been prescribed by Almighty Allah; it must be 100% *halal* (permissible); Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) said: *The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "O people! Allah is Pure and, therefore, accepts only that which is pure* (Sahih Muslim, Book 19, Hadith 1851). Specifically, regarding charitable giving, Almighty Allah tells us the following: *O you who have believed, spend from the good things which you have earned and from that which We have produced for you from the earth. And do not aim toward the defective therefrom, spending [from that] while you would not take it [yourself] except with closed eyes. And know that Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy* (Al-Baqarah: 267). Yusuf Ali sheds more light on the implication of this verse on corporate philanthropy, "Islam will have nothing to do with tainted property. Its economic code requires that every gain should be honest and honourable. Even charity would not cover or destroy the taint... To dedicate tainted things to Allah is a dishonour to Allah, Who is

independent of all wants, and Who is worthy of all honour and praise" (The Holy Qur-an: English translation of the meanings and Commentary, p122-123).

Another important consideration for Muslim businesses when they engage in philanthropy is to strike the balance between been miserly and been extravagant; Both extremes are prohibited in Islam: *And do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck or extend it completely and [thereby] become blamed and insolvent* (Al-Isra: 29). "[Muslim businesses must] not be so lavish as to make [themselves] destitute and incur the just censure of wise men, nor is it becoming to keep back [their] resources from the just needs of those who have a right to [their] help" (The Holy Qur-an: English translation of the meanings and Commentary, p785).

HOW TO GIVE?

In this section, we address the issue of whether or not Islamic corporate philanthropy should be done publicly or secretly. This issue is very important because of the danger of tainting the motivation to give by Muslim businesses. A public display of philanthropy might make Muslim businesspeople want to show off so that people might praise them for their generosity. As mentioned in an earlier section, the grave problem of *riya* can render all charitable philanthropy worthless in Allah's sight.

All-Merciful Allah sheds light on this critical issue in the following verse: *If you disclose your charitable expenditures, they are good; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you, and He will remove from you some of your misdeeds [thereby]. And Allah , with what you do, is [fully] Acquainted* (Al-Baqarah: 271). As mentioned in an earlier section, we also learn from a *hadith* that one of the seven groups of people who receive Allah's shade on the Day of Resurrection is "*a man who gives charitable gifts so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given (i.e. nobody knows how much he has given in charity)*" (Sahih Bukhari, Book 11, *Hadith* 629).

From the verse and *hadith* above, Muslim businesspersons learn that the best corporate philanthropy is that which is done secretly, without fanfare and publicity, and targeted to those most in need. However, doing so publicly is also acceptable in Allah's sight as long as it is done solely to please Him. The Muslim businessperson must earnestly seek Allah's help in keeping his intention pure and staying away from the evil of *riya*.

The normal trend in today's business climate is for companies to produce glossy corporate social responsibility reports filled with a long list of all the company's philanthropic efforts. It seems that the purpose of these reports is to

serve as a marketing tool that paints the company in great light to its consumers and other stakeholders, and hopefully captures new customers as well. Muslim businesses must avoid such a public declaration of their charitable giving so as not to fall into *riya*, thus destroying all their good deeds from the charity. However, if there is a need to disclose such expenditures to relevant stakeholders, for example shareholders, as a means of clearly showing how company funds were spent, then as the verse above pointed out, it is acceptable. The ultimate consideration is that all charitable philanthropy be done solely for the sake of Almighty Allah.

WHO TO GIVE?

As mentioned in an earlier section, the Muslim business has two broad means of implementing a corporate philanthropic strategy, *Zakat* and *Sadaqat*. The beneficiaries of *Zakat* are explicitly stated in the following verse of the Noble Qur'an: *Zakat expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [zakat] and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveller – an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise* (at-Taubah: 60). From this verse, the Muslim business knows to utilize its *Zakat* funds to help the eight identified beneficiaries: 1) The poor, 2) The needy, 3) Those employed to administer the *Zakat* funds, 4) New Muslim converts who would probably be persecuted and boycotted by their former associates, and thus require assistance until they form new connections amongst the Muslim community, 5) Captives of war, 6) Those in debt, 7) Those who are striving in Allah's cause full time and are thus unable to earn an ordinary living and 8) Strangers stranded on a journey (The Holy Qur'an: English translation of the meanings and Commentary, p519).

As for who to give *Sadaqat*, it is left to the discretion of the Muslim businessperson. However, a critical assessment of the eight beneficiaries of *Zakat* listed above reveals that they cover basically all those who would need charity; particularly the first two beneficiaries: the poor and the needy. The Muslim businessperson can thus focus their *Sadaqat* on those eight beneficiaries as well.

CONCLUSION

Islam is viewed by its adherents as a complete way of life. The implication of this view is that every aspect of a Muslim's life is governed by the commands of Almighty Allah in the Noble Qur'an and the practices of the Noble Prophet

Muhammad (PBUH) recorded in the *Ahadith*. This paper examined the issue of corporate philanthropy from this worldview. Specifically it addressed four key aspects of Islamic corporate philanthropy from the point of view of the Muslim businessperson : why give?, what to give?, how to give? and who to give?.

Regarding the question, why give?, this paper addressed two issues: the motivation driving the Muslim businessperson to engage in charity and the benefits of engaging in such charity. For Almighty Allah to accept the corporate philanthropy of any Muslim business, it must have been done with the sole intention of pleasing Him. Any other motivation besides that, particularly the evil motivation of showing off, destroys such a charitable activity. As to the benefits of engaging in sincere philanthropy, 10 benefits to the Muslim businessperson were described, and can be summarized as earning the pleasure of the All-Merciful Creator, earning His protection and mercy, and thus facilitating one's entry into the eternal Bliss of Paradise in the life to come.

In answering the question, what to give?, the paper highlighted the fact that Muslim businesses can engage in obligatory charity called *Zakat*, and in voluntary charity called *Sadaqat*. Regardless of which charity it chooses to engage in, the most important consideration is that the resources utilized must be *halal*, in that they were earned in a manner prescribed in the Quran and *Sunnah*.

As to how a Muslim businessperson should engaged in charity, the paper showcased the fact that the Noble Quran prefers that corporate philanthropic activities be done quietly and without fanfare to those most in need. However, where there is a need to do it publicly so as to fulfil accountability duties or to encourage other businesses to follow suit, it is acceptable to do so. What is most important is the intention to give must be sincerely for Allah's sake alone.

Finally, regarding who the beneficiaries of Islamic corporate philanthropy should be, the Noble Quran identified eight beneficiaries for *Zakat*, which are comprehensive in nature and covers those truly in need of help. Due the encompassing nature of these beneficiaries, it was also recommended that they be targeted with the *Sadaqat* funds as well.

The ultimate goal of all Muslims is the eternal Bliss of Paradise in the life Hereafter. Engaging in sincere corporate philanthropy by Muslim businesspersons is an important step in achieving this magnificent objective. However, doing it alone is not enough to achieve this ultimate goal. Islam is a comprehensive religion covering every aspect of life, with different obligations that Muslims must fulfil. Muslim businesspersons must thus live a life of obedience to the commands of All-Powerful Allah in every sphere of their lives,

whether personal or business, in order to earn His mercy and enjoy the wonderful delights of Paradise.

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