**Devotional on Generosity and Giving**

Opening Prayer:

**O Thou merciful God! O Thou Who art might and powerful! O Thou most kind Father! These servants have gathered together, turning to Thee, supplicating Thy threshold, desiring Thine endless bounties from Thy great assurance. They have no purpose save Thy good pleasure. They have no intention save service to the world of humanity.**

**O God! Make this assemblage radiant. Make the hearts merciful. Confer the bounties of the Holy Spirit. Endow them with a power from heaven. Bless them with heavenly minds. Increase their sincerity, so that with all humility and contrition they may turn to Thy kingdom and be occupied with service to the world of humanity. May each one become a radiant candle. May each one become a brilliant star. May each one become beautiful in color and redolent of fragrance in the kingdom of God.**

**O kind Father! Confer Thy blessings. Consider not our shortcomings. Shelter us under Thy protection. Remember not our sins. Heal us with Thy mercy. We are sick; Thou art mighty. We are poor; Thou art rich. We are sick; Thou art the Physician. We are needy; Thou art most generous.**

**O God! Endow us with Thy providence. Thou art the Powerful. Thou art the Giver. Thou art the Beneficent.**

**- 'Abdu'l-Bahá**

**O CHILDREN OF DUST! Tell the rich of the midnight sighing of the poor, lest heedlessness lead them into the path of destruction, and deprive them of the Tree of Wealth. To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues.**

—Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh: Persian Hidden Words, Page: 49

**Give, and it will be given to you… For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.**

—Christianity, Luke 6.38

**If beings knew, as I know, the fruit of sharing gifts, they would not enjoy their use without sharing them, nor would the taint of stinginess obsess the heart and stay there. Even if it were their last bit, their last morsel of food, they would not enjoy its use without sharing it, if there were anyone to receive it.**

—Buddhism, Itivuttaka 18

**Those who contribute their wealth in the way of God are like a grain which produces seven ears in each of which are a hundred grains. God gives double to whom He wills.**

—Islam, Qur’an 2.263

**Charity knows no race, no creed.**

—Judaism, Talmud

**O YE RICH ONES ON EARTH!**

**The poor in your midst are My trust; guard ye My trust, and be not intent only on your own ease.**

-The Bahai Faith, Baha'u'llah, The Persian Hidden Words

**The parable of those who spend their substance in the way of God is that of a grain of corn: it groweth seven ears, and each ear Hath a hundred grains. God giveth manifold increase to whom He pleaseth....**

**O ye who believe! Cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury-‑ like those who spend their substance to be seen of men, but believe neither in God nor in the Last Day. They are in parable like a hard, barren rock, on which is a little soil: on it falls heavy rain, which leaves it (just) a bare stone. They will be able to do nothing with aught they have earned....**

**And the likeness of those who spend their substance, seeking to please God and to strengthen their souls, is as a garden, high and fertile: heavy rain falls on it but makes it yield a double increase of harvest, and if it receives not heavy rain, light moisture sufficeth it. God seeth well whatever ye do.**

# -Islam, Mohammad: The Qur'an: 2:261, 264-265

**Humans take from the needy to further enrich the rich. The one who can take from his overabundance and give to a needy world has attained Taohood.**

*-*Lao-Tzu: Tao-Te-Ching, no. 77

**Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer to the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility.**

-The Bahai Faith, Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha’u’llah

##### **Story—St Martin**

When St Martin was a very young boy, he was made a knight so that he could serve in the army of the Emperor of France in place of his father who was old and ill. Martin was sent to a place called Amiens. One morning he saddled his beautiful white horse and went riding among the hills outside the town. As he was enjoying the cool morning air he met a very poor man. The man was so very poor that he didn’t have any clothes. Martin’s heart was full of pity. Having nothing else to give, he cut his cloak in two with his sword and gave one half to the beggar. On the following night Martin had a dream. Jesus Christ appeared to him wearing the half of the cloak he had given to the poor man the previous day. In giving to the poor man St Martin was giving to Jesus Himself.

**Bestow My wealth upon My poor, that in heaven thou mayest draw from stores of unfading splendor and treasures of imperishable glory....**

-The Bahai Faith, Baha’u’llah, Hidden Words

**Man reacheth perfection through good deeds voluntarily performed, not through good deeds the doing of which was forced upon him. And sharing is a personally chosen righteous act: that is, the rich should extend assistance to the poor, they should expend their substance for the poor, but of their own free will, and not because the poor have gained this end by force. For the harvest of force is turmoil and the ruin of the social order. On the other hand voluntary sharing, the freely‑chosen expending of one's substance, leadeth to society's comfort and peace. It lighteth up the world; it bestoweth honour upon humankind.**

-The Bahai Faith, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l‑Baha, p. 115 (from a letter to Andrew Carnegie)

Prayer: **O Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds and whose breath gives life to all the world, Hear me! I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom. Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes ever behold the sunset. Make my hands respect the things you have made and my ears sharp to hear your voice Make me wise so that I may understand the things you have taught my people. Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock. I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy - myself. Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes. So when life fades, as the fading sunset, my spirit may come to you without shame.**

-Native American Prayer

Prayer: **In the name of God, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds, the Compassionate, the Sovereign of the day of judgment. Thee do we worship and of Thee do we beg assistance. Direct us in the right way; in the way of those to whom Thou hast been gracious, on whom there is no wrath and who do not go astray.**

#### -Islam, The Qu’ran 1:5-7

Prayer: **Lord! Pitiful are we, grant us Thy favor; poor, bestow upon us a share from the ocean of Thy wealth; needy, do Thou satisfy us; abased, give us Thy glory. The fowls of the air and the beasts of the field receive their meat each day from Thee, and all beings partake of Thy care and loving-kindness.**

**Deprive not this feeble one of Thy wondrous grace and vouchsafe by Thy might unto this helpless soul Thy bounty.**

**Give us our daily bread, and grant Thine increase in the necessities of life, that we may be dependent on none other but Thee, may commune wholly with Thee, may walk in Thy ways and declare Thy mysteries. Thou art the almighty and the Loving and the Provider of all mankind.**

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá