

Paul's Charity versus Maimonides's Tzedakah: Loving Giver or Dutiful Donor?

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Divergent Paths to Giving: Paul versus Maimonides

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Introduction

“Slaves must serve their masters with fear and trembling, single-mindedly, as they serve Christ...
Give the cheerful service of those who serve the Lord, not human masters.” (Ephesians 6:5 -9)

Both Paul and Maimonides not only preached about charity and tzedakah but engaged in public fundraising for the needy. Paul’s main beneficiary was the Jewish-Christian church of Jerusalem whose poverty was partially a reflex of their devotion to Jesus demonstrated by turning away from work and giving away their inherited property, as well as their missionary activity. Maimonides, having been a refugee from religious persecution in Cordova, Spain, arrived in Egypt in 1166 at the age 31. He made a big mark on his new community soon thereafter by spearheading a campaign to raise funds for redeeming Jewish captives held by the Crusaders in 1169. After 1171 when he was chosen official head of the Jewish community, he became very involved in all the tzedakah work dealing with every detail of taxation and allocation. A tzedakah document signed in his own hand has been found in the Geniza in Cairo. But Paul’s and Maimonides’ ideals of religious giving and its motivation are very different.

As selfless and self-sacrificing as Paul’s narrative of *agape* and charity is (Galatians 5:13-14, 22-23), Maimonides’ narrative is about the self – self-preservation of the prudent giver and self-enhancement of the fragile self-respect of the needy recipient. For Paul, the giver must be very careful not to give with pride or belief that his acts justify him before God, while for Maimonides the giver must scrutinize the relationship of giving to be most solicitous of the pride of the recipient by ingenious manipulation of the form one’s gift takes. In both cases, the good works of charity and of tzedakah may lead one to sin – the sin of pride and the sin of hurting another’s pride, respectively. For Paul, law is the problem, while for Maimonides it is part of the solution. According to Paul God’s self-sacrificing love of his son is redemptive for those fully accepting their dependence on faith in God, but they remain dependent after their salvation. Redemption is not about restoring the independence of the poor, but about the acknowledgment of the giver and the recipient of their utterly faithful dependence on God. The material situation of the beneficiaries of charity is never fundamentally changed. For Maimonides, God’s redemption of Israel from Egypt removes the material plight of economic exploitation and enslavement and then grants them their own land where they can be economically independent. So too redemption of the destitute individual means acquiring employment and hence economic independence without continuing social dependence on one’s benefactors. Reliance on God does not require denial of human works, for God empowers as well as rescues. These diverging theological narratives of *agape* and tzedakah interpret and apply the practice of *love your neighbor* as charity and tzedakah, in very different ways.

Part A: Divergent Paths to Giving: Paul versus Maimonides summarizes ten characteristic differences between the core narrative of giving in Paul and other Christian texts with the same orientation and Maimonides and similar rabbinic views. Admittedly there are other motifs of giving in both Paul and Maimonides that will be discussed in other chapters. Part B: The Cheerful Giver explores in depth the seminal text of Paul’s giving as cheerful and hence not compelled by law or social expectation. That point is pivotal for the relationship between love and law and hence its treatment as a separate section below.

Divergent Paths to Giving: Paul versus Maimonides

1. The Joy of Receiving a Free Gift or the Shame of Being a Charity Case?

Anonymous giving to avoid shaming the poor is a major principle in Maimonides' original ranking of the eight rungs of tzedakah.¹ Therefore tzedakah – at its highest level - must be camouflaged as a loan, a gift or an investment¹ -- for self-respect means being respected by others for one's own self-possession and achievements. Consider the characterization of self-respect by political philosopher Michael Walzer:

“In order to enjoy **self-respect**, we must believe ourselves capable of measuring up, and we must accept responsibility for the acts that constitute measuring up or not measuring up. Hence, self-respect depends upon a deeper value that I will call ‘**self-possession**,’ the ownership not of one's body but of one's character, qualities, and actions. ... **Self-esteem** is ... [constructed on] ‘borrowed’ qualities; we live in the opinion of others. **Self-respect** is a matter of our own qualities: hence of knowledge, not opinion, and of identity, not relative standing. This is the most profound meaning of Mark Anthony's line: ‘If I lose mine honor, I lose myself.’”ⁱⁱ

To protect the self-respect of the needy, one must hide gifts of mercy under the guise of a loan or an investment in their business that may ultimately earn the poor their own self-possession with their economic independence. The sensitive donor must be willing to forgo the public honor of being recognized as a benefactor and relinquish the satisfaction of receiving the deference and the gratitude of the recipient. One exemplary Talmudic donor, Mar Ukba, ran into a hot oven just to avoid shaming the poor (TB Ketubot 68a).

If being given tzedakah degrades the needy socially and implicitly, and marginalizes them by contrast to the citizen who is a house or property holder (*baal ha-bayit*), then when the needy give back, they may reaffirm their sense of self, their sense of belonging. The key is to treat the poor whose resources are limited as if they still have much to give, without shaming them by asking them to give when they cannot afford it. This dance of dignity in giving and accepting gifts is performed exquisitely in this halakha:

“A poor person who gave a small coin (*perutah*) to the communal tzedakah fund (*kuppah*) and a piece of bread to the daily soup plate (*tamhui*) - they accept it from him. If he did not give - they do not obligate him to give.

“If they give him new garments, but he wishes to return [to the tzedakah collection] his old garments, they accept them from him. If he did not give them, they do not obligate him to give.” (Tosefta Peah 4:10)

The key is not just that the poor help others as they were helped, but that they pay their social dues into the community chest, fulfilling their civic duties like anyone else. Thus, they break out of the stereotype generated by accepting aid thereby reclaim their standing as contributing members of society.

Here is an exciting contemporary example of inclusion of the needy in the legal obligation to give back to the community. The Tel Aviv University social work program began recruiting young women who had dropped out of their homes and lived in the streets, to study to become mentors for other teenagers in danger of the same fate, because these former drop-outs could communicate with their younger colleagues. In the process, the

¹ “Which form of tzedakah rescues the giver from a strange death – one who gives but does not know to whom he gives [like Rabbi Abba who throws the coins behind his back as walks through a poor neighborhood] *or* one gives but the recipient does not know from whom it is taken [like Mar Ukba who dropped off money in the door jam and when the recipient sought to catch him and acknowledge his gift; Mar Ukba ran from him and even hid in a still-warm public oven to avoid removing the veil of secrecy]? So what should one do [if the question is not answered decisively one way or the other]? Give to the purse of [an official *kuppah* of] tzedakah, [for then neither giver nor recipient will know each other's identity]. (TB Baba Batra 10b; See TB Ketubot 67-68)

university trainers discovered what these former drop-outs had to offer, and the trainees who had always been recipients of others' aid discovered they could be students in the university and could contribute to society, rather than be a burden on society. After the training course they often volunteered for the national service organization, Bat Ami, to work with drop-outs four days a week, receive a stipend and, after two years, a grant for their work just like any soldier or national service volunteer who gives two or three years to their country. The university training session was the lever for a transformation to empowerment through giving to others, thus changing their self-image.

By contrast, the potentially hurt pride of the beneficiary of charity is never mentioned in the New Testament.ⁱⁱⁱ Nor must Christian charity be hidden under a disguise such as a loan or an investment. Begging itself is not shameful but indicative of the situation of all humans in relation to God. In the paradigmatic act of charity, when Divine love and forgiveness are showered on the ashamed sinner, s/he is meant to feel not embarrassment but an overwhelming gratitude for a free and undeserved gift. Then the grateful recipient of unearned love may share that love with a neighbor who may in turn share a gift with others. Through the chain of gracious gifts, whatever shame the recipient may have felt melts away. Or, put differently, the shame one does feel for accepting charity is appropriate for a Christianity that preaches human sinfulness. There is an essential moral and spiritual value to shame² and, moreover, to the admission of helplessness as the necessary route to Divine grace.

In the era of the Reformation, the underserving poor were publicly shamed and so even the deserving poor felt like parasites, moral and spiritual failures. Even one Reformer, Marin Bucer (1491-1551), dismissed the shame of the needy, or elevated and spiritualized it by regarding their suffering as identical with the bearing of God's cross. Their poverty was sent to them to test their faith and to help them perfect themselves spiritually:

“No Christian, even though he has fallen into poverty (and regardless of the high social standing which he once enjoyed) should be ashamed of the cross of Christ and the salutary remedy administered by the Lord through need. It is even less proper for Christians to find it distasteful to accept alleviation of their need through the ministry of his Church as from the very hand of the Lord, by whose most righteous, and to them no less salutary, judgment they have been plunged into poverty and humility of life.” (Bucer, *De Regno Christi*, England, 1550, for King Edward VI)

Unlike tzedakah, for Catholics and for Protestants with different rationales, there is no reason for the distribution of charity to tiptoe around the sensitive egos of the poor.

² Most exceptionally, John Chrysostom is a Christian theologian deeply concerned to save the poor from shame:

“The stranger requires much attendance, much encouragement, and with all this it is difficult for him not to feel abashed; for so delicate is his position that whilst he receives the favor, he is ashamed. That shame we ought to remove by the most attentive service, and to show by words and actions, that we do not think we are conferring a favor, but receiving one, that we are obliging less than we are obliged.” (Chrysostom, *Homily 14 on 1 Timothy*, NPNF1, vol. 13, 455)

Gregory of Nazianzus in "On Love of the Poor" encourages his audience to attend to the victims of a leprosy outbreak, especially to the wealthy, for **"those who suffer evil in a way that contradicts their dignity are even more wretched than those who are used to misfortune."** (Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 14, translated by Brian E. Daley, 78-79).

2. Pride³ – A Sin or a Human Need?

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” (Matthew 6:1-4)

Rabbinic tzedakah recognizes, beyond the material needs, the social need to shore up the battered pride of the poor, especially the social pride of the formerly wealthy. That is why a famous Talmudic tale describes the willingness of the head of the Sanhedrin, Hillel, to run like a slave before a formerly rich pauper, as a sign of deference to him. That kind of gesture exemplifies the law in which Maimonides legislates that tzedakah be given in accordance with one’s former social honor (Gifts to the Poor 7:3). By contrast, Matthew’s Jesus, while prohibiting the shaming others (Matthew 5:22), places the essence of his moral message not on restoring one’s pride but on forgoing it, as in the case of relinquishing vengeance⁴ and turning the other cheek when humiliated (Matthew 5: 38-40). Paul never speaks of the lost social honor of the needy nor of the goal of protecting that fragile self-esteem from further embarrassment when distributing alms in a public way.⁵

³ While the pure “logic” of the Paulinian school militates against prideful giving, in practice Paul in his letter to the Corinthians knows quite well how to motivate his donors by **complimenting them on their generosity and speaking of how proud he is of their behavior and how ashamed they will be if they fail to keep their promises:**

“There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord’s people. For I know your eagerness to help, and **I have been boasting** about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.” (II Corinthians 9:1-5)

⁴ Moshe Cordovero, the 16th C. Kabbalist, recommends a course of patient suffering in the face of insult that has some parallels to Jesus’ turning of the other cheek. An in-depth comparison requires much more research.

“Who is a God like unto You?” refers to the Holy One as a patient King who bears insult in a manner that is above human understanding. No man ever sins against God without the Divine affluence pouring into him at that very moment, enabling him to exist and to move his limbs. Despite the fact that he uses it for sin, that power is not withheld from him in any way. But the Holy One bears this insult and continues to empower him to move his limbs even though he uses the power in that moment for sin and perversity, offending the Holy One who, nonetheless, suffers it. This is to be insulted and bear the insult, beyond words. This is why the ministering angels refer to the Holy One, Blessed is He, as ‘the patient King.’ And this is the meaning of the prophet’s words: *Who is a God unto You?* He means: ‘You, the good and merciful, are **God**, with the power to avenge and claim your debt, yet You are patient and bear insult until man repents.’ **This is a virtue man should make his own, namely, to be patient and allow himself to be insulted even to this extent and yet not refuse to bestow of his goodness to the recipients.** (Moshe Cordovero, *Tomer Deborah*, 16th C. Safed)

⁵ Thomas Aquinas, the exception to much Christian social ethics, maintains that alms *may* be given to those who need to shore up their lost social station. For he appreciates, as does Maimonides the notion of social needs:

“A thing is said to be necessary, if **a man cannot without it live in keeping with his social station**, as regards either himself or those of whom he has charge. The ‘necessary’ considered thus is not an invariable quantity, for one might add much more to a man’s property, and yet not go beyond what he needs in this way, or one might take much from him, and he would still have sufficient for the decencies of life in keeping with his own position. Accordingly it is good to give alms of this kind of ‘necessary’; and it is a matter **not of precept but of counsel.**” (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, Second Part of the Second Part. Charity: Almsgiving: Question 32: Article 6*).

However, unlike the Rabbis, for Aquinas such alms given to the fallen of the higher classes are not a matter of “precept,” not an obligatory mitzvah, but merely a matter of discretionary judgment – “counsel.” But Aquinas holds strongly that **“no one ought to live unbecomingly.”**

For much of Christianity, the insistence on human social honor is valueless and sinful before God, even if preachers trying to raise funds appeal to the donors' honor for pragmatic reasons.^{iv} For St. Gregory (6th C. Rome), **pride⁶ is the primary sin⁷ of the seven deadly sins**, the original sin in the Garden, and the origin of all the other sins.^v For Rudolf Bultmann (20th C. Germany), Paul's notion of human sin originates in self-assertion. Human beings have the illusion that they can save themselves by their acts and then boast of their own strength. But ironically they thereby drive themselves farther away from God upon whom all are dependent for salvation as grace. That, he says, is why Paul emphasizes that all human beings are slaves to sin by their very nature (Romans 1:18-3:20). Their bondage is to desire, to be carnal, and when law tells them: *Thou shalt not eat from the tree of knowledge lest you die*, then they are condemned to death for they cannot overcome their nature and their carnal desires. That is why salvation must come as a free gift, unearned, unmerited; as a pardon, not as a justification of merit or a declaration of innocence.^{vi} So the beginning of salvation is admitting one's **helplessness**, not maintaining the self-delusion of one's own power. In this sense, for example, the Twelve Step program for recovering addicts has deep Christian roots when it stipulates that the first step is **to confess one's inability to save oneself**. The ideal recipient of help begins by admitting utter helplessness.

Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous include:

1. Admitted we were **powerless** over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a **Power greater** than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have **God remove all these defects of character**.

Aquinas continues: "The Apostle Paul says (2 Corinthians 8:13): 'Not that others should be eased,' i.e. should live on you without working themselves, 'and you burdened,' i.e. impoverished. In this passage the words, 'not that others should be eased/ refreshed,' refer to that abundance of alms which surpasses the need of the recipient, to whom one should give alms, not that he may have an easy life, but that he may have relief. Nevertheless we must bring discretion to bear on the matter, on account of the various conditions of men, some of whom are more daintily nurtured, and need finer food and clothing. Hence Ambrose says (*De Officiis* i, 30): '**When you give an alms to a man, you should take into consideration his age and his weakness; and sometimes the shame which proclaims his good birth; and again that perhaps he has fallen from riches to indigence through no fault of his own.**'" (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, Second Part of the Second Part. Charity: Almsgiving: Question 32: Article 10*)

⁶ The death and resurrection are all "in order that man's pride might be exposed and healed through God's humility" (Augustine, *Enchiridion* XXVIII #106). In Timothy 2: 1-2 prayers may be offered by the lowly "for kings and all those of exalted places" "whose worldly pomp and pride could be supposed to be sufficient cause for them to despise the humility of the Christian faith." But "God has judged it good that through the prayers of the lowly he would deign to grant salvation to the exalted" (Augustine, *Enchiridion* XXVII #103).

⁷ "'**We have so many corners of pride; it's the innermost sin.** David said it in Psalms... You try to work on yourself ... wearing yourself down a little more each time.' She rubbed her hand against the wood table, smoothing it... 'Those moments help make you small. And if you overcome those moments, your smallness opens a new way... **The way to God is the way of smallness.** To be a child. Even Jesus had to start as a child. Whoever asks God for humility will for sure get his request... To be little gives an opening to God ... Our effort is to cut the ground from under our feet. And even a little of the feet too. It's frightening. But you get such a feeling of inner freedom that you're ready to go through it again. You can get rebuked in every possible way. In community, there's always someone to say, Who do you think you are? even if not in words.'

The sisters made pottery to help support the convent. But to encourage detachment, no cup or vase was entirely done by any sister; instead, one woman shaped the clay, another drew the outline of a pattern, a third painted, and a fourth fired the final result. Johanna, who had been an artist before entering the convent, learned to renounce not just the artistic product but the artistic process itself." (Interview with Catholic sister Yanik from the convent of Beit Jamal, Latrun, Israel, the order of the Sisters of Bethlehem devoted to silent worship in Yossi Klein Halevi, *At the Entrance of the Garden of Eden*, 110, 113)

Humans have no rights before God and any pride is sinful, whether by giver or receiver. The poor's attempt to maintain self-esteem is likely to be a denial of their fundamental spiritual lost-ness, not a healthy or morally valuable act that maintains human dignity. The Christian gift of love makes one feel unconditionally loved, but it does not seek to raise the poor's self-respect as Maimonides seeks to reinforce the needy's honor and autonomy by offering employment or by giving anonymously to protect them from shame.^{viii} Pauline giving enhances the asymmetrical gap between giver and recipient. Yet when your neighbor, who is also a sinner addicted to a perverse will, offers you unconditional love, there should be no undue shame. For God's grace is mediated through the hands of other fellow sinners, outcasts and failures who have now been loved and healed by Jesus' grace. What is self-evident to the Rabbis and to Maimonides is inconceivable to Paul that an act of love as charity would evoke shame rather than gratitude for grace, as it is meant to when God's and Jesus' great acts of self-sacrificing love are proffered to a sinful humankind. If the Jews reject redemption as a gift and insist on winning justification by their own acts, that is a sign of their stubborn pride to be condemned.

Thus the Christian concern with pride in the giving of charity is focused on the danger of the boasting giver and the theologians have reached great depth and nuance in their psychological-spiritual-cultural analysis of **the arrogance of charity**. For example, Gregory Nazianzen acknowledges but criticizes, backhandedly, those who give to the poor in search of glory, just as they give to causes characteristic of Greco-Roman philanthropy for their own social and political advancement:

“When it comes to magnificence with money ... many waste their money on civic and public ambitions, and many loaned it to God via the poor, these being the only ones that store up savings for the spenders. **But we do not readily find anyone who passes up the glory attached to it.**”^{ix 8}

By contrast, Gregory Nazianzen's account of his father's almsgiving emphasized “his father's virtue that he apparently avoided the honour attached to generosity... The noblest and greatest aspect was that he attached no desire for honour to his magnificence.”^x

The Church father of the 4th – 5th C. faced the challenge that while having successfully converted the Greco-Roman aristocracy to Christianity, they had imported a powerful elite still committed to the Greco-Roman values of civic philanthropy as the path to self-glorification:

⁸ Eragrius Ponticus introspects on the temptations and rationalizations of the arrogant giver of alms:

“The demon of Love of Money appears to me to be very complex and inventive in its deceit. Often, hemmed in by extreme renunciation, it pretends to be a steward and a lover of the poor; it prepares generous hospitality for strangers who have not arrived and sends provisions to others who are absent; it visits the prisons of the city and ransoms those sold into slavery; it attaches itself to rich women and points out those persons who ought to be treated well, as it admonishes others who have a full purse to renounce. And after it has little by little deceived the soul in this way, it surrounds the soul with the thoughts of love of money and hands it over to the demon of Vainglory. That demon introduces a crowd of persons who glorify the Lord for these acts of stewardship and people who eventually talk to one another about the priesthood; then it predicts the death of the present priest and adds that someone who has accomplished so many things should not flee (from the possibility of ordination).

And so the wretched intellect, entangled in these thoughts, takes issue with those persons who have not accepted (ordination) and gives gifts to and receives with courtesy those who have accepted it willingly, while it hands over to the magistrates those who disagree with it and demands that they be banished from the city. Finally, while these thoughts are circling around within (the intellect), the demon of Pride suddenly appears, forming continuous flashes of lightning in the air of the cell, letting loose winged-dragons, and producing the uttermost loss of one's wits. But as for us, let us pray for the destruction of these thoughts and live in poverty with thanksgiving, 'for we clearly brought nothing into this world, and we cannot bring anything out of it; since we have food and clothing, let us be content with these' (1 Tim. 6:7-8), remembering that Paul said, 'Love of money is the root of all evils' (1 Tim. 6:10).” (Eragrius Ponticus. *Thoughts*, 21)

“Augustine, Ambrose, Paulinus, and others waged a campaign against older expressions of civic generosity of which they disapproved, in particular the provision of games and theatrical shows, and advocated almsgiving as an alternative source of honour from largesse. Money spent in one way was not available to be spent in another, and failure to give alms could be exploited to devalue traditional forms of euergetism.

"Augustine declaimed: ‘He puts on showy games, gives crazy presents to actors, gives nothing to the starving poor: he is unworthy of his riches.’ Almsgiving, recast by these leading Christian thinkers as civic euergetism [philanthropy], was meant by them to compete with older expressions of euergetism which fell under Church censure. The timing of the charitable collections by the Roman church set charity in contrast, if not competition, with the pagan largesse distributed at the *Ludi Apollinares*.”^{xi}

The inner struggle of the Christian aristocrat between old and new ideals of giving is analyzed by Jerome, who engages in the “character assassination” of a Roman matron who doles out coins at St. Peter’s, but punches the old woman who returns for a second coin. Thus the donor reveals her concern for the honor, not the mercy of almsgiving:

“I saw just recently in St. Peter’s Basilica one of the noblest Roman women (I suppress her name, in case you think this is a satirical attack) who, preceded by her eunuchs, was distributing coins one by one to the poor, handing them out in person so as to be thought all the more devout. While this was going on [as is a well-known practice] a certain old woman all enveloped in rags and old age, ran up to take another coin. When it came to her turn in line, a fist shot out instead of a denarius, and blood was spilled to pay for the guilt of such a crime.” (*Ep.* 22.32. Letter to Eustochium)

The historian Richard Finn explicates the struggle with pride implicit in this tale of Jerome and his letter to Paulinus (395 CE) about people “jealously guarding former riches under the cloak of almsgiving:”

“The noble woman’s distribution of alms in person at the *martyrium* is a practice which she and the readers recognize as a source of honour, but which Jerome attacks as disreputable, vitiated first by her intention, the desire to win maximum publicity in a premeditated display of generosity and humility (handing over the coin in person), and then by the conduct which reveals her true state of mind. The generosity does not stretch so far as a second *denarius*, while the blow reveals false humility in the confident assertion of moral and social superiority. The honour to be won in this way might also be impugned. It was vulnerable to attack from radical ascetics who saw it as the figleaf covering the retention of wealth and pursuit of worldly glory. The woman’s reaction to what she perceives as the hag’s insolence shows the widespread contempt towards the poor which preachers sought to eradicate.”^{xii}

This noblewoman’s arrogance has subverted her acts of charity. Here anonymity in the distribution of her charity through church would have saved her from temptation. Its goal would, as we said, be to save her purity of motive, not to preserve the dignity and pride of the poor.^{xiii}

Paul and the Church Fathers are remarkably consistent in their denigration of human pride in the donor and their lack of concern for the shame of the recipient. However, Maimonides manifests a deep inner tension between his halakhic and ethical concern lest the needy be shamed by public exposure of their shameful dependence and his philosophic and spiritual critique of all human pursuit of honor.

Like the Church Fathers and unlike Aristotle, Maimonides holds that social honor is not a virtue. Therefore he emphasizes his divergence from the Aristotelian ethics of the golden mean, which he otherwise adopts.⁹ He commends extreme humility and rejects the central Aristotelian aristocratic virtue of the **great-souled one** who balances his character between too much pride – arrogance – and too little self-assertion - self-denigrating humility. He does not agree with Aristotle’s view that one must demand to be treated according to one’s

⁹ “The good path is the middle measure in each and every trait.” (Maimonides, Laws of Character Traits 2:2)

objective social worth. He disdains boastfulness even when it is appropriate and therefore urges the wise person to forgo honors and to ignore insults which a Greco-Roman aristocrat would never forgo or forgive. Instead, on humility Maimonides preaches an extremism unusual for him:

"There are some character traits that one not practice them by staying to the middle course but rather make himself as far from one pole - arrogance as possible. For it is not the good path just to be humble, but to be very lowly in spirit. The Moshe Rabbenu is called *very humble* (Numbers 12), not just humble.... The Rabbis commanded us to be *very, very low in spirit* and further anyone who raises his heart in arrogance is like one who denies the monotheistic belief." (Maimonides, Laws of Character Traits 2:3)

So too with pride's win – anger or righteous indignation when one's honor is insulted. Better to be passive than aggressive; better to be insulted than to insult others; better to accept suffering with love than to protest:

"So too is anger a very bad trait and one ought to distance oneself from that pole and teach himself not to become angry even about something about which it is worth getting angry." (Maimonides, Laws of Character Traits 2:3)

Why, we must ask, does Maimonides contradict Aristotle by adopting such extremist behavior that seems at odds with his whole appreciation of nature's gradualist approach to change and its tendency to harmony between opposites? Hasn't Maimonides himself condemned in the most explicit way the extreme religious ascetic?

"They began to flagellate their bodies with all sorts of torture thinking this was the way to acquire virtue, to do good, and thus to come closer to God, as if God hates the body and wants to kill it and destroy it." (Introduction to the Commentary on Avot Chapter 4)

Moshe Halbertal, in his book *Rambam*,^{xiv} argues that Maimonides' pursuit of humility is inspired by several factors. First, the Biblical and Rabbinic background that praises humility as exemplified in the figure of Moses who is "humbler than any person" (Numbers 12: 3). Secondly, Maimonides was inspired by Sufi mystics from whom he adopts this anecdote about one who was truly happy and serene when a rich merchant urinated on him without arousing the victim's anger:

"I saw in a book on virtues where they asked one of the important pietists (*hassid*), what was the happiest day of your life? He said: The day I sailed aboard a ship and I was on the least of the places on the boat, among the baggage, while there were on the boat merchants and men of wealth. I was lying in my place and one of these men on the boat got up to urinate, and I was so very low in esteem in his eyes, that he exposed his nakedness and pissed on me. I was astonished at the strength of his brazenness in his soul, but I swear by God's life, that my soul was not pained at his behavior at all. My strength was not aroused and I was so greatly happy that I reached the point that being degraded did not hurt." (Maimonides, Avot 4:4)

Maimonides does not attribute this impassive response to social shame to a dualist denigration of the body or a psychological malady of low self-esteem. Rather, it reflects an achievement in training one's character and the realization of a truer self-worth that does not depend at all on social honor, on conventionality or on others' opinions. He has achieved the Stoic ideal of apathy to society's pursuit of honor and rejected what is central to the political ethos of Aristotle.

Maimonides' disregard for social esteem also derives from his agreement with Aristotle's preference for the *vita contemplativa* of the philosopher studying nature and metaphysics, as opposed to the *vita activa* of the polis where social standing plays an essential role. Maimonides, writes Moshe Halbertal, adopts the Aristotelian phrase that "humans are social/political by their nature" in a completely new sense. To maintain our bodily needs we need a stable, harmonious political order, but that is **only a means** to our true *telos* – philosophical self-actualization – which is not a social activity.

Tikkun ha-guf, cultivating the health of the body, includes politics and is a prerequisite to *tikkun nefesh*, cultivating the soul, but engagement in political life presents moral dangers to the perfection of the soul and its virtues. While we need to establish a political regime, one must also liberate oneself from social opinions, for the pursuit of honor and pride typical of politics and political leaders. Here one finds one's true self-worth in philosophy, in knowing God, and then our love of God displaces completely our love for the high social status granted by our fellow citizens:

“The thought of that individual [the prophet] should be detached from the spurious kinds of rulership and that his desire for them should be abolished - I mean the wish to dominate or **to be held great by the common people and to obtain from them honor and obedience for its own sake.**” (*The Guide* II 36)

Further, Maimonides' humility has a deep spiritual impetus. In studying philosophy one discovers that by comparison to God we are infinitesimal in our wisdom and strength. *Yirat Kavod*, awe of God, "puts us in our place;" it shows us our humble position relative to the wisdom of nature and the majesty of God and belittles whatever social honors we may have earned in the opinion of society:

“And what is the way that will lead to the love of Him and the fear of Him? When a person contemplates His great and wondrous works and creatures and from them obtains a glimpse of His wisdom which is incomparable and infinite, he will straightaway love Him, praise Him, glorify Him, and long with an exceeding longing to know His great Name; even as David said: *My soul thirsted for God, for the living God* (Ps. 42:3). **And when he ponders these matters, he will recoil affrighted, and realize that he is a small creature, lowly and obscure, endowed with slight and slender intelligence, standing in the presence of Him who is perfect in knowledge.** And so David said: *When I behold Your heavens, the work of Your fingers....what is man, that You are mindful of him?* (Ps. 8:4-5).” (*Laws of Foundations of the Torah* 2:2)

“When a man reflects on these things, studies all these created beings, from the angels and spheres down to human beings and so on, and realizes the Divine wisdom manifested in them all, his love for God will increase, his soul will thirst, his very flesh will yearn, to love God. **He will be filled with fear and trembling, as he becomes conscious of his own lowly condition, poverty, and insignificance, and compares himself with any of the great and holy bodies;** still more when he compares himself with any one of the pure forms that are incorporeal and have never had association with corporeal substance. **He will then realize that he is a vessel full of shame, dishonor, and reproach, empty and deficient.**” (*Laws of Foundations of the Torah* 4:12).

Therefore, there is no place for pride in human achievement relative to God.^{xv}

“The Prophets too have explained to us and interpreted to us the selfsame notions just as the philosophers have interpreted them, clearly stating to us that neither the perfection of possession nor the perfection of health nor the perfection of moral habits is a perfection **of which one should be proud** or that one should desire; the perfection **of which one should be proud** and that one should desire is knowledge of Him, may He be exalted, which is the true science. Jeremiah says concerning these four perfections: ***Thus spoke the Lord: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me.*** (Jeremiah 9:23).” (*The Guide*, III 54)

Nevertheless, Maimonides, in legislating about tzedakah in particular and interpersonal ethics in general in the Mishne Torah, does everything he can to protect the poor, especially the formerly aristocratic poor, from social shame and in condemning the unforgiveable sin of shaming someone in public.¹⁰ Tzedakah does not belong to

¹⁰ Although the Church Fathers were also aware of the special concern of aristocrats to help their colleagues who had fallen from economic grace, at most they made it a secondary consideration given the more pressing needs -- greater virtue and purer motives in helping the destitute:

the spiritual economy of humility, but to the political and psycho-social realm of social honor; therefore one's body and one's honor must be upheld even if they are only instrumental values. While the religious philosophers must learn to dismiss social insults against themselves as trivial, they must, as philosopher-kings and as fellow human beings, defend the honor of the less enlightened while servicing their material and emotional needs. While the Sufi pietist does not mind when the rich urinate on him, the needy in the laws of *tzedakah* would most likely be so ashamed to the point that they would prefer death. When the gap between their visible material condition and social self-esteem opens a chasm, then to be served lentils is enough of a reason to die. Even if social pride is a spiritual sin, respecting and propping up the social esteem of the fallen poor is a *mitzvah* that satisfies a need and a halakhically recognized right.

3. The Extrinsic or Intrinsic Value of Human Life

Maimonides' concern for the dignity of the poor is founded on a deep Biblical and Rabbinic belief in the intrinsic value of human life. Human life must be preserved because it is an unconditional value and *pikuakh nefesh*, the *mitzvah* of rescuing a life, even one who is brain damaged or can live only briefly, takes precedence over almost every other *mitzvah* or value: "One who maintains the life of a person is regarded as if they had saved the whole world" (Mishna Sanhedrin 4). For Jews – poor or not – human life is doubly valued for theological reasons, because they are loved by God both as creatures in God's image and as Jews descended from Abraham. Rabbi Akiba says that "human beings are beloved because they are created in the image of God and Jews (*Yisrael*) are beloved because they are called children of the Divine" (Avot 3:14). These two metaphors – image of God and child of God – ascribe inalienable statuses that cannot be lost as external possessions may be lost. One's pride of origin is validated both through Creation and through Revelation to Abraham, which provide the basis for ongoing valuation and love by God.

By contrast, for the Paulinian school of Augustine, Luther and Anders Nygren, human lineage is polluted, going back to the original sin of Adam that undermines all intrinsic natural value. That fallen nature becomes second nature into which all children of Adam and Eve (and the snake) are born. For some Christian theologians the fall entails the loss of the image of God and only through Christ – God's true child and the embodiment of God's image – can the Divine image be regained.¹¹ Only Christ, the New Adam, who sacrifices himself, can redeem the Old Adam and restore his purity. For Christians, shame at one's intrinsic sinfulness is essential for them to open themselves to the grace necessary for eternal life:

“Our fellowship with God, then, rests for us on the basis not of holiness but of sin; and for God, upon His entirely unmotivated, groundless love, which justifies not the man who is already righteous and holy, but precisely the sinner.... Jesus' message of fellowship with God [includes the sinner, for] ‘I have not come to call the righteous, but to call sinners’ (Mark 2: 17) and that is Paul's gospel of the justification of the sinner.” (Nygren, *Eros and Agape*, 687)

“If we are to be praised for keeping our mind unclouded by these things, think how much more impressive it is if you win the people's affection with a generosity that is neither wasted on undeserving claimants nor mean where the poor are concerned! Yet there are many different forms of generosity: not only to provide and distribute food for the poor with a daily supply, but also **to advise and help those who are ashamed to display their need in public, so long as the common stock of food for the needy is not exhausted.**” (Ambrose, *De officiis* 2. 72)

¹¹ Calvin writes: “All the benefits which God gave Adam and Eve were meant to flow from them to us. And what happened was that by their sin, especially their unfaithfulness, they lost these good things for themselves and also, therefore, for us. So everything we were to receive from them is gone and cannot be found again until you come to the humanity of Christ [who] contains in himself all of the good things that we lost in Adam, for we need access to another human being who can give us these things. Christ in his humanity becomes the one who transforms us back into the image of God.” (Randall Zachman, 40)

While many humanist Christians see in God's love for human beings a recognition of the intrinsic value of every individual as the bearer of a pure soul, the image of God and God's goodness in creation, Anders Nygren argues that that kind of humanism is alien to Paulinian *agape*:

“*Agape* starts with the conviction of one's own lack of worth.¹² When man has fallen away from God, he is wholly lost and has no value at all. But just in this is the ‘point of contact’ for God's *Agape*, since **God seeks that which is lost. All thought of ‘merit’ is here excluded.**”

“*Agape* does not recognize value, but creates it. *Agape* loves, and imparts value by loving. The man who is loved by God has no value in himself; what gives him value is precisely the fact that God loves him.”^{xvi}

Thus redemption entails death to the fallen self and rebirth in a new creation in the image of God.

The radical asymmetry¹³ between the sinful human being and the all-perfect God highlights the free gift that God grants and its power to transform the saved soul. So too Paul differs from Plato, who sees in the human soul something originally Divine, hence immortal, or from Kabbalah's fallen Divine spark or from Kant's rational autonomist being or from the Bible's human being created in the image of God. It is only the beloved soul granted new value in its rebirth that has value. That value cannot precede the grace of Divine *agape*.^{xvii}

Therefore in practice Paulinian charity, unlike Maimonidean *tzedakah*, is not concerned with protecting the poor's dignity, for a human have no dignity prior to or apart from God's act of charity in redeeming them. Nor is Paul's Divine love for humanity a matter of justice rendering them what they are due by their value. This Protestant reading of Paul is beautifully articulated by the German 20th C. theologian, Emil Brunner (as summarized here by Paul Ramsey):

“In his ethical writings, Emil Brunner, the 20th C. Protestant theologian, has rather consistently set forth a ‘dualistic’ understanding of the relation between biblical ‘righteousness’ and the natural law or between love and justice. Brunner maintains a strict ‘distinction between what holds good in the **world of institutions** and what holds good in the **relationship of persons**’ (I-Thou); and this corresponds to ‘**a strict distinction between the justice and the *suum cuique* [the Greco-Roman law of ‘to each according to their due’] and the love which knows nought of rights and claims.**”¹⁴

¹² “God does not love that which is already in itself worthy of love, but on the contrary, that which in itself has no worth acquires worth just by becoming the object of God's love....The man who is loved by God has no value in himself; what gives him value is precisely the fact that God loves him. *Agape* is a value-creating principle.” (Nygren, *Eros and Agape*, 78)

¹³ Speaking of Jesus' teaching, Nygren says that “fellowship with God is not governed by law but by love. God's attitude to men is not characterized by *justitia distributiva*, but by *agape*, not by retributive righteousness, but by freely giving and forgiving love” (*Eros and Agape*, 70). If “God, the Holy One, loves the sinner, it cannot be because of his sin, but in spite of his sin.... When God's love is shown to the righteous and godly, there is always the risk of our thinking that God loves the man on account of his righteousness and godliness. But this is a denial of *Agape* - as if God's love for the ‘righteous’ were not just as unmotivated and spontaneous as His love for the sinner! ... It is only when all thought of the worthiness of the object is abandoned that we can understand what *Agape* is. God's love allows no limits to be set for it by the character or conduct of man. The distinction between the worthy and the unworthy, the righteous and the sinner, sets no bounds to His love.” (*Eros and Agape*, 77-78)

“Forgiveness in particular and *Agape* in general are ‘indifferent to value’ - that is, indifferent to whatever might be the worth or value of the person loved and to what recognition of that worth might require of us. One of the most striking and provocative aspects of Nygren's thought is his insistence that **not only is God's love of human beings not motivated by recognition of their worth or conditioned thereon, but also that human beings simply have no worth except that which is created in them by God's agapic love for them.**... Few of the other modern day agapists were willing to go this far.” (N. Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, 44-45)

¹⁴ To appreciate the original meaning of Paulinian *agape* that juxtaposes love as grace and law, the extrinsic gift of love and the acknowledgment of intrinsic worth, consider how the contemporary theologian Nicholas Wolterstorff, committed to the value of each unique individual based on God's love, is forced to reject Paul. Wolterstorff insists that love must value the beloved and seek to protect their just due – their respect – hence love as caring for someone whom we appreciate is intertwined with justice, that is, rendering them their due:

"Throughout there is an essential and complete difference between the meaning and requirements of justice and the meaning and requirements of love. Love is 'all-the-same' and in spite of everything, it is 'never love because'; while justice is always rendered 'because.' **Love always bestows worth, while justice only judges worth.** Love is 'born simply of the will to love, not of the nature of the beloved,' while **justice rests upon an apprehension of the nature of the one to whom it is due and upon respect for his claims.** 'Justice makes no free gift; it gives precisely what is due to the other, no more and no less.' 'Justice is never concerned with the human being as such, but only with the human being in relationships. Justice belongs to the world of systems, not to the world of persons.'^{xviii xix}

Echoes of this intrinsic worthlessness of the human creature can be heard even in John Calvin's commentary about the creation in God's image on Genesis 9:6, *Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person's blood be shed, for in his own image God made humankind.* On one hand, Calvin does insist that the image of God remains inherently even in an unrepentant sinner. Yet on the other hand, the value of another human being is only the value of the common image of God within us which does not mean at all that God values our individual self or our moral achievements, for those have been corrupted.

Calvin comments:

"Men are indeed unworthy of God's care, if respect be had only to themselves; but since they bear the image of God engraven on them, he deems himself violated in their person. Thus, although they have nothing of their own by which they obtain the favour of God; he looks upon his own gifts in them, and is thereby excited to love and to care for them. This doctrine, however, is to be carefully observed, that no one can be injurious to his brother without wounding God himself. Were this doctrine deeply fixed in our minds, we should be much more reluctant than we are to inflict injuries."

Human value must be respected, but not for its own sake and not for the individual achievements of human beings but for the *extrinsic* grant of God's image. God's image should never be misread as a basis for pride as if humans possessed *intrinsic* dignity.

4. Justification by Grace or by Works?

For Maimonides, the pride that the poor crave is not only a matter of descent from Abraham or of universal human dignity implicit in the image of God, but a product of their own efforts and achievements. To use Paulinian terms, the poor wish to be "justified" or valued for their "works," not as a gratuitous act of mercy. Similarly, the Jewish lawyer in the frame story of the Good Samaritan also wants to earn his place in the world-to-come by his works – by observing the laws which he wants Jesus to teach him (Luke 10). But in his Letter to the Romans, Paul repeatedly denigrates justification by acts:^{xx}

"By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight." (Romans 3:20)

"Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law." (Rom. 3:27-28)

"The understanding of love that we need, if agapism is to be plausible as an ethical system, is an understanding of love as seeking both to promote the good in a person's life and to secure that she be treated as befits her worth. To treat her as one does because justice requires it is to love her.

"Love thus understood incorporates *Eros*, ***Eros* is attraction-love, the love of being drawn to something on account of its worth, attracted to it, sometimes even mesmerized by it.** As such, *eros* is a mode of acknowledgment of worth. Treating someone as one does because justice requires it is a way of acknowledging her worth. Thereby it is *Eros*. Nygren polarized *agape* and *eros*. *Agape* incorporates *Eros*." (N. Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, 93)

"For what does the Scripture say? *And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (tzedakah)* (Gen. 15: 6)" (Rom. 4:3), and "Therefore, having been justified by faith." (Rom. 5:1)

"But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness" (Rom. 4:5).

"The free gift in the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many." (Rom. 5:15)

The term "righteousness" and "justification" are alternative translations of the same Biblical word *tzedakah*, which does not mean alms here but some sort of credit for the right action that will earn God's reward. A student of the rabbis is one who believes in his justification *both* by the grace of having been a son of Abraham, marked by circumcision, and by acts according to the law. Paul was himself at one time "justified by descent and by works" not only as a Jew but also as a Pharisee, just as he himself "boasts":

"If any other man thinks he has reason for **confidence in the flesh**, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law - a Pharisee, as to zeal - a persecutor of the church, as to **righteousness under the law - blameless**.

"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that **I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith;** that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead." (Phillipians 3:4b-11)^{xxi}

Paul rejects both those Jewish forms of justification - by birth and by acts - in favor of a righteousness wholly dependent on God's will. But for the Paulinian tradition, if human beings were to do *teshuvah* (repentance) on their own in the rabbinic sense, or if they were to regenerate themselves economically, then they might become enamored of their own human empowerment. That would likely lead them to the illusion of self-sufficiency, and that leads to the sin of pride. One who is proud will fail to appreciate the greatness of God's free gift which is the only true kind of love. So the Christian God forgives without demanding any change of behavior to prove that one is worthy of absolution.^{xxii} Thus neighborly love means forgiveness to others for their debts to us and to enemies for their past injuries without any change of behavior from them.^{xxiii} That is Paul's and Luther's doctrine of justification by faith and not by works. Good works are not the result of human initiative that then earns Divine love or forgiveness. Nor is faith itself the result of a voluntary act of belief earning one access to Heaven. Rather, good works flow naturally *after, and only after*, God grants forgiveness and love. Love is the gift we have received, and the one that we must in turn extend to others.^{xxiv}

Anders Nygren claims: "The Christian is not an independent centre of power alongside of God. The love which he can give is only that which he has received from God."^{xxv} Luther follows Paul loyally in contradistinction to Catholic piety:

"In Catholic piety he finds ...righteousness is transformed from something God gives into something man achieves. At the same time, everything also centers upon man's own interest. Through the idea of merit, the good which he does is put into intentional connection with eternal blessedness, so that it comes to be regarded less as obedience to God, than from that point of view of the profit it yields for man." (Nygren, *Eros*, 681)

Paul's *agape* eradicates God the judge not because that God is wrathful and without love, but because Paul's God must be free to love without recognition of value.¹⁵ After failing to live up to expectations, there is **no covenant**, no give and take, no living up to standards and no *teshuvah*, though there will be radical transformation and regeneration when Divine love is experienced as grace. In being granted a free gift of forgiveness, the Christians escape the condemnation of the Divine Judge, however, they forfeit the sense of achievement in having justified themselves by their own merit before the Heavenly court.

In *The Four Loves*, C. S. Lewis explains our discomfort with Divine love as a truly free gift without judgment:

"No sooner do we believe that God loves us than there is an impulse to believe that He does so, not because He is Love, but **because we are intrinsically lovable**. Far be it from us to think that we have virtues for which God could love us... Grace substitutes a full, childlike and delighted acceptance of our Need, a joy in total dependence. We become 'jolly beggars'... And he is not sorry at all for the innocent Need that is inherent in his creaturely condition. ...The consequences of parting with our last claim to intrinsic freedom, power, or worth, are real freedom, power and worth, really ours just because God gives them and because we know them to be (in another sense) not ours.'" ...

"But this, though a sort of love we need, is not the sort we want. We want to be loved for our cleverness, beauty, generosity, fairness, usefulness. The first hint that anyone is offering us the highest love of all is a terrible shock. ...How difficult it is to receive, and to go on receiving, from others a love that does not depend on our own attraction... The man who can take this sweetly, who can receive all and give nothing without resentment, who can abstain even from those tiresome self-deprecations which are really only a demand for petting and reassurance, is doing something which Need-love in its merely natural condition could not attain... We are all receiving Charity. There is something in each of us that cannot be naturally loved. It is no one's fault if they do not so love it. Only the lovable can be naturally loved."^{xxvi}

Our thesis is that this theological language of grace rather than merit explains why Paulinian charity shows no interest in helping the poor become financially independent as Maimonides clearly does. While the Rabbis seek many stratagems to avoid exacerbating the needy's intensely uncomfortable sense of inadequacy, of worthlessness, of lack of justification, and unworthiness to be loved, Christian charity thrives on the self-acknowledgement of neediness and helplessness. The total "selflessness" of the giver of charity is often inseparable from the denial of any "self-worth" to the recipient.

For Paul the Law brings death because it confronts human beings with their inability to live up to its standards and hence their sins earn them a death sentence. The alternative path to life, after Christ, is justification by faith as Paul emphasizes by his threefold use of Habakkuk 2:4: "*See, the enemy is puffed up.... but the righteous (just) will live by his faithfulness (emunah);*" "But by my righteous one will live by faith" (Hebrews 10:38, see

¹⁵ "Calvin says: 'Only unmerited grace can enable us to do this. If grace is given, we will love our neighbors regardless of their merits or their charms. And this love will result in concrete aid.' What matters, Calvin stresses, is not works of love alone, but the motive that gives rise to them: 'he who merely performs all the duties of love does not fulfill them, even though he overlooks none; but he, rather, fulfills them who does this from a sincere feeling of love' (III.VII.7)." (J. B. Schneewind, "Philosophical Ideas of Charity Some Historical Reflections," 56)

C. S. Lewis in *The Four Loves* writes that love originates with God:

"God is love. Again, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us' (I John IV, 10)...God, who needs nothing, loves into existence wholly superfluous creatures in order that He may love and perfect them...God is a 'host' who deliberately creates His own parasites; causes us to be that we may exploit and 'take advantage of' Him. Herein is love.

"God, as Creator of nature, implants in us both Gift-loves and Need-loves. The Gift-loves are natural images of Himself. .. The Need-loves have no resemblance to the Love which God is. But Divine Gift-love is Love Himself working in a man - is wholly disinterested and desires what is simply best for the beloved. Natural Gift-love is always directed to objects which the lover finds in some way intrinsically lovable-objects ...But Divine Gift-love in the man enables him to love what is not naturally lovable; lepers, - criminals, enemies, morons, the sulky, the superior and the sneering." (cited in *The Perfect Gift*, edited by Amy Kass, 47 ff.)

Romans 1:17); and. "Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, *The righteous will live by faith*" (Galatians 3:11). It is not false pride about one's achievements but humble trust in God that saves. By comparison, the Rabbis also use the same verse for the same purpose – to offer those who cannot live up to all 613 mitzvot – an easier path to salvation in the world-to-come. But the Rabbinic path is to provide a mitzvah that one can live up to in order to earn by one's own merit salvation. God's grace is to multiply mitzvot so that at least one will be appropriate to every Jew, not to abrogate the commandments and replace them with a path of justification by faith alone. In the last Mishna in TB Makkot 3:16 at the end of many chapters (Sanhedrin and Makkot together) about capital punishment in this world and the punishment of *karet*, Divine exclusion from the world-to-come, Rabbi Hananya ben Gamliel declares: "If one performs one single mitzvah ... his life will be given to him." The Rabbi Hananya ben Akashya then says: "The Holy One blessed may He be wanted Israel to earn merit, therefore God multiplied for them Torah and mitzvot, as it says, *YHWH wants for the sake of his righteousness (justification) to expand Torah and make it strong* (Isaiah 42:21)." In short, each mitzvah is not a stumbling block for death but an opportunity for earning eternal life.

The Talmud then brings an analogous point about how easy God makes it for people to win salvation, using a series of midrashim that gradually whittle down the number of essential mitzvot needed, from 613 to 11 to 3 to 2 to 1 which is attributed to "Habakkuk who stood all the mitzvot on one [pillar], as it says, *The righteous (just) will live by his faithfulness (emunah)* (Habakkuk 2:4)" (TB Makkot 24a). Although this last verse gives priority to faith in God, the earlier midrashim focused almost exclusively on moral commandments and their observance beyond the letter of the law. For example, Micha the prophet identifies three mitzvot, as it says, *To do justice, love lovingkindness and walk humbly with God* (Micah 6:8), which is the verse with which Maimonides ends with *The Guide to the Perplexed*, as we shall see. In interpreting "walking humbly," the Talmud explains that it refers to attending funerals and weddings. Many of these special interpersonal mitzvot are identified with particular rabbis who made the behavior his mark of distinction. Thus morality rather than faith is central to most of this Rabbinic midrash, unlike Paul's midrash.

Maimonides reinforces this view that God shows grace by multiplying mitzvot to enable almost all to earn salvation without extravagant effort. In his commentary on Makkot 3:16 he expounds:

"It is one of the foundations of the faith in the Torah that a human being performs appropriately and properly one mitzvah of the 613 mitzvot without mixing in to his motivation any of the earthly motives (objectives) at all, but rather one does it for its own sake out of love ... then that person merits life in the world-to-come. That is why Rabbi Hananya said that given the multiplicity of mitzvot it is impossible that a person will not during one's whole life perform one single mitzvah in perfection and thereby merit immortality of soul by that action.

Thus we see evidence of this fundamental principle in the conversation with Rabbi Hananya ben Tradyon who was asked: 'What about me and life in the world-to-come?' He answered: 'Didn't you ever do an action [a mitzvah]?' In other words he asked him: 'Didn't you ever have an opportunity to do a mitzvah properly?' The person answered: 'Once I did happen to perform the mitzvah of tzedakah in the most perfect way possible.' So he merited life in the world-to-come." (Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishna, Makkot 3:16)

For Maimonides, even one mitzvah requires pure intention of love of God, not merely a mechanical act of obedience. But that is wholly accessible to all. That is God's grace and that is a foundation of the Torah which is not death-dealing book of law indifferent to human frailty or differential ability.

The Hassidic rebbe of late 19th C. Gur, Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib distinguishes Jewish merit from non-Jewish grace. His formulation approximates the distinction we are drawing between Paulinian Christian notions of charity and Maimonides' notion of the highest form of tzedakah as giving someone a job:

"The difference between the nations and all the other creatures upon whom God lets flow his goodness and the children of Israel is that **Israel is chosen to earn all [the blessings granted by God] by the agency of their own**

actions. Thus Abraham our father participated in both modes, initially being among the nations [he received *hesed*, grace] and later he received [the first mitzvah] – circumcision - so that he could earn it by right of his own actions and that is why human beings are not born circumcised, but the covenant is the product of human effort... That is the higher rung of Abraham our father and his seed after him, such that they merit to exhibit their power in their actions. This is God's humility – for actually God possesses all – yet nevertheless God desires that the children of **Israel will earn their merit by their actions.**" (Rebbe of Gur, *Sefat Emet, Vayera*, 5638)

Appendix: A Dissenting View: The “New” School on Paul

In direct contrast to the dichotomous view of opposed values - Paul's grace versus Maimonides' law, the NT scholar James Dunn has been leading an all-out scholarly crusade to show that on this central point post- New Testament Christianity has totally misunderstood both Rabbinic Judaism and Paulinian Christianity. He has built his approach on the groundbreaking studies of E.P. Sanders who argues that Rabbinic Judaism was not, after all, a religion of “works righteousness” – justification of one's worth before God by doing mitzvot, but rather one of grace, *hesed* – a free gift of God. James Dunn writes:

“E.P. Sanders in *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* observed that the starting point for Judaism's self-understanding as the people of God (both second Temple Judaism and rabbinic Judaism) was the covenant made by God with Israel; the covenant was nowhere regarded in Jewish writings as an achievement of human merit. And although Jews had the responsibility to maintain their covenant-standing by obedience to the law, the repeated emphasis on repentance, and the centrality of a sacrificial system which provided atonement for the repentant within Israel's pattern of religion, meant that the characterization of that religion as legalistic and merit-based was misconceived, unjustified, and prejudicial. Sanders coined the phrase ‘covenantal nomism’ to embrace both aspects - the divine initiative of God's choice of [Israel] (covenant), and the response of obedience required from that people (law/nomism) [after being chosen by grace].”^{xxvii}

E.P. Sanders writes:

“Paul is in agreement with Palestinian Judaism.... Salvation is by grace but judgment is according to works.... God saves by grace, but ... within the framework established by grace he rewards good deeds and punishes transgression.... Election and ultimately salvation are considered to be by God's mercy rather than human achievement.”^{xxviii}

James Dunn observes:

“The Judaism of what Sanders christened as ‘covenantal nomism’ can now be seen to preach good Protestant doctrine: that grace is always prior; that human effort is ever the response to divine initiative; that good works are the fruit and not the root of salvation.” (James Dunn, *Justice*, 8)

Here is no place to mount a full refutation of this sweeping revisionism. One may well acknowledge that Sanders is correct about Rabbinic Judaism in emphasizing the importance of *hesed*, which will be discussed later in this book, as it connects to *tzedakah* and *gemilut hasadim*. Surely Rabbinic Jews, especially according to the Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur liturgy, appeal to Divine grace when they fail to live up to their covenantal responsibilities. But even when asking for forgiveness, it is for particular sins and particular oaths which we could have avoided and could have kept, hence they must be detailed. Promises of repentance mean they believe they can, and must, act differently. The covenant is not an obstacle that Israel cannot obey. Israel's election may be an act of unjustified grace, but that grace does not make Israel immune from judgment and guiltless for its sins. God's *hesed* does not play the crucial role that Christian grace does in offering to sinful humankind an unconditional pardon. That we are beloved of God as an act of grace in our chosenness is no substitute for trying to maintain a covenant we made and we believe can be fulfilled. Can Paul's denial that anyone can live up to the law, that law condemns all to death, be reconciled with the rabbis? Not in my

judgment. These narratives are incompatible with Rabbinic Judaism and its covenant cannot be understood, as Dunn asserts, as “good Protestant doctrine.”

So these new Pauline scholars have argued that Paul’s calling to grace is no different than the Jews’ calling to God as God’s chosen people. Both are arbitrary and neither is justified by works. Yet even while Jews did rely on their beloved status as God’s people or as Abraham’s descendants, when they needed mercy, they preferred, in the Rabbinic worldview, to live up to God’s commandments. So, too, the Jewish poor would like nothing better than to be self-sufficient and to succeed on their own strength – “without taking loan from flesh and blood” (*Birkat HaMazon*, Blessing after Meals). A Jew must acknowledge Divine help, but one prefers not to be beholden to humans. Given a loan or job, one can earn one’s own living, just as one can do *teshuvah* and earn forgiveness rather than begging for it as a gift of grace. Self-sufficiency (or at least being a partially ‘self-made man’) is a central Jewish value that makes accepting tzedakah from others so problematic.

5. Original Sin or Free Will?

Aid for the poor may flow from the donors’ mercy for their suffering and a desire to give them relief, or from a belief in their rehabilitation. It all depends on whether the donor’s faith in the recipient’s power of will, whether in economic or moral contexts. In the moral context, Maimonides is a great champion of free will and the refuter of all determinism – astrological, genetic or environmental. God would not have given the Jews the Torah and mitzvot if God had not endowed them with free will and will power to obey and succeed in living up to the Covenant:

"All human beings have the permission to direct themselves toward the good path and be righteous – they have the authority to do so!....One does whatever one wishes and nothing hinders one's hand from doing good or bad...Do not think - what the stupid among the nations and most fools among the children of Israel think – that God predestines one's destiny from birth whether to be righteous or wicked... It is not like that. **Anyone is worthy to be as righteous as Moshe Rabbenu** ... That is the foundation of the Torah and the mitzvah ... Otherwise why would the prophets exhort us to repent? ... Won't the Judge of the whole earth do justice? ... Know that you have in hand the power to act and [hence] you are destined to be judged." (Mishne Torah, Laws of Repentance 5:1-4)¹⁶

This faith in free will applies to other areas of human endeavor such as war. Maimonides explains the defeat of Judea in the battle with the Romans (70 CE) was the result of a misplaced faith in the pseudo-science of astrology. They should have used their God-given reason to learn the arts of war. Maimonides, in his *Letter on Astrology to the Rabbis of Montpellier* (1194), makes explicit his commitment to the use of scientific knowledge to empower human beings to maintain their own independence; our destiny is determined by our free will, not by external fates over which we have no control:

“Thus you ought to know that fools have composed thousands of books of nothingness and emptiness. Any number of men, great in years but not in wisdom, wasted all their days in studying these books and imagined that these follies are science.This is why our kingdom was lost and our Temple was destroyed and we were brought to this. For our fathers sinned and are no more because they found many books dealing with these themes of the stargazers, these things being the root of idolatry, as we have made clear in his "Laws Concerning Idolatry." They erred and were drawn after them, imagining them to be glorious science and to be of great utility. **They did not busy themselves with the art of war or with the conquest of lands, but imagined that those studies would help them.** Therefore the prophets called them fools and dolts and truly they were, for they walked after confused things that do not profit (see Jeremiah 2:8; 4: 22; I Samuel 12:21).”

¹⁶ “The truth is indubitable that all humans have control over their actions, so that if they will, they do and if they don’t wish, they don’t do without any constraint and that is why it is appropriate to command them: *Look, I am giving before you today life and goodness ... and you may choose life* (Deut. 30:15).” (Maimonides, *Introduction to Avot*, Chapter 8)

"And know, my masters, that it is one of the roots of the religion of Moses our Master - and one that all the philosophers also acknowledge that - **every action of human beings is left to them** and that there is nothing to constrain or draw them. Rather, if he so pleases, a man will worship God and become wise and attend the house of study. And if he so pleases, he will follow the counsel of the wicked and run with thieves and hide with adulterers. **There is no influence or constellation under which one is born that will draw him in any manner toward one of those ways.** Hence it was commanded and told to him: Do this and do not do that."^{xxix}

According to Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik, freedom of will is the power to recreate oneself as a perfect being. That is how he explicates Maimonides' Laws of Teshuvah:

"Man can be the architect of his own personality; he has the ability to fashion his own character and map out the path he will follow.... This repentance which brings about a radical transformation of a whole way of life leading to a rebirth of the personality is repentance of redemption. He is in a wholly liberated and redeemed state."^{xxx}

Just as human moral regeneration through *teshuvah* without God's intervention is always possible whatever one's record of failures, so, too, in the realm of economics, can the poor become independent. According to Deuteronomy 15 and Leviticus 25, the brothers of the poor who have fallen need to forgive the poor their debts, lend them more resources at no interest, take them into their homes, buy them back their freedom from slavery and their agricultural base. They must even redeem them time and again through several cycles of failure. All this does not guarantee financial redemption. It still depends on the poor taking advantage of this renewed opportunity – the land, the loan, the job. But Maimonides believes they can succeed – with outside help *and* with inner will power. **Maimonides' highest level of tzedakah is an act of faith by one human being in another, in the power of human self-regeneration.** Maimonides urges the donors to invest in a business partnership with one who has so far proven to be an inept business person. In that sense tzedakah grants the poor a chance to do *teshuvah*, to reshape their character traits and then live more wisely and successfully.

By contrast, the Paulinian tradition describes human beings as slaves of sin lacking all self-control:

"I do not even acknowledge my own actions as mine, for what I do is not what I want to do, but what I detest...The good which I want to do, I fail to do; but what I do is the wrong which is against my will; and if what I do is against my will, clearly it is no longer I who am the agent, but sin has lodged in me." (Letter to the Romans 7:15, 17)

The lack of free will which is indicative of the unspiritual nature (Romans 7:5; 8:3-4) makes justification by law impossible. Rather we are condemned by the law for our impotence. Therefore human effort can bring about no improvement in our situation. Law makes things worse not better (Romans 7:7-13). Therefore one cannot redeem oneself, one cannot do *teshuvah*, but needs to be saved from above:

"Miserable creature that I am, who is there to rescue me out of this body doomed to death? God alone, through Jesus." (Romans 7:24-25)

"So it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy." (Romans 9:16)

In a letter attributed to Paul's school but perhaps not written by Paul's hand, the doctrine of justification by God's grace, not human works, is most explicit:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and **this is not your own doing**; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what He has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life." (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Redemption is a matter of rebirth when humans die to their body and are reborn in the body and life of Christ, so they can "serve God in a new way, the way of the spirit" (Romans 7: 6). But there is no justification by acts (Letter to the Galatians 2:15-16, 21). For that same reason, as we saw in the previous chapter, Christian

forgiveness is granted unconditionally to the unrepentant sinner, while rabbinic *teshuvah* is conditioned on the perpetrator's contrition, confession, compensation and request for pardon for the victim. That is God's stance and hence the expected human stance toward the sinner. In that case, even after *teshuvah* and after compensation, there is still a powerful residue of a damaged relationship. It is that residue that is addressed in the Jewish act of grace. Then *after* repentance by the sinner, the Jewish victim and the Jewish God are expected to forgo their desire for vengeance or retribution.¹⁷

For Paul, the sinner cannot be expected to repent on his or her own even though the original sin by Adam was an act of free choice.¹⁸ How we became so corrupted is explained by Augustine¹⁹ and Luther who understood

¹⁷ **"The pair, repentance and forgiveness, is a moral-social engagement.** To pardon a crime or mitigate its punishment is to recall the sin and yet forgive what was done to me, so that no punishment is involved. No vengeance need be exacted. But our relationships will be reshaped by your having sinned, your having apologized and repented and my having forgiven you. Reconciliation absorbs the history of pain and sin, and the identity of perpetrator and victim is transformed by their new narratives of themselves. The impotent victim is turned into the decisive empowered forgiver who determines his aggressor's fate and judges his character. The aggressor rewrites his biography as a penitent empowered to revise his past." (N. Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, 174)

"Repentance is the remorseful acceptance of responsibility for one's wrongful and harmful actions, the repudiation of the aspects of one's character that generated the actions, the resolve to do one's best to extirpate those aspects of one's character, and the resolve to atone or make amends for the harm that one has done." (Jeffries Murphy, *Getting Even*, 41)

"We shall be to one another what we were before, save for one important difference. I know now that you are a person who can forgive.... and that to keep me as a friend, or to avoid becoming my enemy, is more important to you than to maintain your own rights. And you know that I am a person who is not too proud to acknowledge his fault, and that your goodwill is worth more to me than the maintenance of my own cause. Forgiveness does not only forestall or remove enmity; it strengthens love." (John Burnaby, *Christian Words and Christian Meanings*, 87)

"Repentance and forgiveness bear the potential of liberating both victim and malefactor from the on-going morally destructive effects of the wrongdoing and of giving to each a new insight into the moral character of the other; thereby they open up the possibility of a renewed relationship. Punishment of the wrongdoer achieves neither of these; it neither liberates the parties from the moral pit in which they find themselves nor does it enable reconciliation. Nor, does forgetfulness or any other form of 'bygone' by the victim achieve these goods." (N. Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, 189)

¹⁸ Augustine: "Human nature lost... immortality through misuse of free will. Not even then [in the Garden of Eden], however, could there have been any merit without grace. For although sin had its origin in free will alone, still free will would not have been sufficient to maintain justice, save as Divine aid had been afforded to man, in the gift of participation in the immutable good." So too in the afterlife salvation cannot depend on merit alone. 'The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 6:23). We are therefore to understand that even man's merited good are gifts from God." (*Enchiridion* XXVIII #106 and 107)

¹⁹ The eloquent historian of early Christianity, Paula Fredriksen, characterizes Augustine's mature understanding of freedom of will in Paul as follows:

"Will operated with extreme internal constraints. The will, Augustine argued brilliantly when explicating Romans 9, is undermined by its own self. Conflicted, ineffectual, this will is indeed 'free' - no star or demon or external power compels it - but it is **free only to sin. Absent grace, the best that a person can do is to want not to sin, though he cannot not sin.** This enervating condition is the just penalty visited on the whole family of man, because of the sin committed by the whole family of man, back when all were 'in Adam.'" (Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*, 279).

Augustine interprets Paul's Letter to the Romans as proof of the loss of human freedom which is the effect of the original sin of Adam: "In the deep self of the seeker, that sin has wrought its worst damage. Sin has ruptured the human self by tearing apart will and affect, thought and feeling. As now constituted, a person cannot choose what she loves; and if she loves, she cannot will herself not to love. **Love, the motor of the will, escapes the mind's control.** After the Fall, every person's loves - good intentions notwithstanding - are misdirected *carnaliter*, and people act accordingly. What moves a person is not what she knows, but what she wants. Augustine sums up this condition as **the divided will: the mind knows one thing but wants something else**; it thinks one thing but feels something else.

Augustine sees Paul as describing this condition, the universal punishment for Adam's sin, in his letter to the Romans: 'I do not understand my own actions.... I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing that I hate.... I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. I do not do the good that I want, but the evil that I do not want is what I do' (Romans 7:15-20). Augustine memorably captures this paralyzing paradox of wanting and not wanting the same thing at the same time, describing his own struggle to commit to celibacy as his path into the catholic church, when he prayed: 'Grant me chastity and continence; but not yet' (*Confessions* 8.7,17) ... After Adam human will is free only to sin." (*Sin*, 117-118,125).

the Fall of Adam as a loss of the free will to do good as well as the collapse of one's rational power to see the truth. Human will is corrupted unless healed by Divine intervention, as Nygren explains:

"In the ethics of **Agape** the opposition between good and evil is conceived exclusively in terms of the **will**. Sin has nothing essentially to do with the bodily or sensual nature. Sin is **the perversion of the will, ungodliness, disobedience to God; it is man's self-centered rebellion against God**. Hence conversion signifies a complete change of heart, whereby the selfish will is transformed into a theocentric will, a will **determined by God**." ^{xxxii}

The goal of Christian salvation is then not to achieve human freedom and self-determination but to accept the determinations of one's destiny by God. Thus Paul would, I assume, argue against an approach to poverty that encourages rational study of economics, and character-change through reformation of their habits. Empowering the poor is not a model that can be learned by analogy from Paul's religious anthropology.

6. Law: A Stumbling Block or a Guide to Ethics?

As we saw above, for Paul, and Augustine after him, law tempts humans by arousing their carnal desires, leads to a sin that rules over them and eliminates the ability to control their passions. With sin then comes punishment and death as God's decree, as stated in the Torah, for all who violate the law. Law is a stumbling block for fallen man, especially the Jews:

"What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; but that Israel who pursued a Law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.'" (Paul, Romans 9:30-33)

Yet Paul could also speak positively about the epitomization of all the Law into one commandment: "The entire law is summed up in a single command: *Love your neighbor as yourself* (Galatians 5:14).^{xxxiii} Despite his polemic against the necessity of law for Gentile Christians, Paul understood very well the positive rabbinic view of law for Jews, but he thought that view tended to aggravate Jewish arrogance:

"Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the Law and boast in God; if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the Law; if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little children, **because you have in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and truth**." (Romans 2:17-20)

That wisdom approach to law is also Maimonides' concept of God's law as a source of knowledge recognized universally *for it is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the nations* (Deut. 4:6). Law is ideally

In *City of God*, Augustine invokes this **divine inscrutability** to account for all of salvation history:

"This was God's decision; a just decree, however inscrutable to us. For Scripture says, *All the Lord's ways are mercy and truth* (Ps 25.10). His grace cannot be unjust; nor can his justice be unkind" (City of God 12.28). We can neither see nor know how God is just; we can only affirm by faith that he is just. **If out of pure mercy God chooses to save some from their justly deserved penalty of eternal damnation, then the only appropriate and pious response is to be grateful for his compassion.**" (Sin, 126). "The Jews had [not] embraced true Christianity because [they] had [not] been enabled by God to do so. [Why?] Augustine invokes God's 'mysterious and hidden justice' where he discusses the fate of the Jews." (Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*, 279).

However one must also note that other Christian theologians - who were later declared heretics by the Catholic Church - understood Paul as maintaining a more robust notion of free will, such as Origen and Pelagius.

more about advice than about coercion, more about education than about behavioral prohibitions for the sake of order.²⁰

“Although the statutes in the Law are all of them divine edicts, yet it is proper to ponder over them and to give a reason for them, so far as we are able to give them a reason. The sages of former times said that King Solomon understood most of the reasons for all the statutes of the Law. **The Law has plumbed the depths of man's mind and the extremity of his evil impulse.** ... These laws [restricting the redemption of vowed gifts to the Temple] serve to conquer one's natural inclination [to acquisitiveness, in this case] and to reform (*tikkun*) one's moral qualities. And **the greater part of the rules in the Law are but counsels from of old (Isaiah 25:1), from One who is great in counsel (Jer. 32:19), to correct our moral qualities and to keep straight all our doings.** And so Proverbs says: *I have written for you excellent things of counsels and knowledge, that I might make you know the certainty of the words of truth, that you might bring back words of truth to them that sent you*" (Proverbs 22:20).”(Maimonides, Laws of Substitute Offerings 4:13)

Since human beings have the knowledge of truth and the free will to do what is right and there is no devilish external power to deceive us and lead us astray, there is no reason why we cannot repent and do better. Similarly, with economic and political activity there is no reason that we cannot rehabilitate our situation. It takes practice to develop these choices into character, into virtue, into second nature. Moral problems are, for Maimonides, a matter of practice, not of moral ignorance or doubt, nor of moral corruption of human nature. Micah Goodman explains how, for Maimonides, Torah as a healing wisdom can be of help:

“People lie and fornicate because they are weak, not because they are malicious. Moral weakness is psychic weakness....Moral *tikkun* (reformation) is achieved not by persuasion but by strengthening the will by exercise, just as an athlete hones his muscles by training.” (Micah Goodman, *The Secrets of the Guide*, 214)

There is no congenital weakness of will in its struggle with the power of the flesh, but merely the weakness of the lazy. It is halakha's lawful patterns of behavior that carefully regulate our emotions and our habits that build up will power. Thus, giving tzedakah 100 times improves one's character in a way that one-time giving does not:

“For example, when someone gives to one deserving 1,000 gold zuz all at once – to one person but nothing to another – such a person will not acquire the trait of generosity by that one great act [of tzedakah], as much as one who gives 1,000 gold zuz 1,000 times.” (Maimonides, *Commentary on Avot* 3:18)

²⁰ “There are persons who find it difficult to give a reason for any of the commandments, and consider it right to assume that the commandments and prohibitions have **no rational basis** whatever. They are led to adopt this theory by a certain disease in their soul, the existence of which they perceive, but which they are unable to discuss or to describe. For they imagine that these precepts, if they were useful in any respect, and were commanded because of their usefulness, would seem to originate in the thought and reason of some intelligent being. But as things which are not objects of reason and serve no purpose, they would undoubtedly be attributed to God, because no thought of man could have produced them.

According to the theory of those weak-minded persons, man is more perfect than his Creator. For what man says or does has a certain object, whilst the actions of God are different; He commands us to do what is of no use to us, and forbids us to do what is harmless. Far be this! On the contrary, **the sole object of the Law is to benefit us.** Thus we explained the Scriptural passage, *for our good always, that God might preserve us alive, as it is this day* (Deut. 4: 24). Again, *which shall hear all those statutes, and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people* (Deut. 4: 6). He thus says that even every one of these ‘statutes’ convinces all nations of the wisdom and understanding it includes.

But if no reason could be found for these statutes, if they produced no advantage and removed no evil, why then should he who believes in them and follows them be wise, reasonable, and so excellent as to raise the admiration of all nations? But the truth is undoubtedly as we have said that **every one of the six hundred and thirteen precepts serves to inculcate some truth, to remove some erroneous opinion, to establish proper relations in society, to diminish evil, to train in good manners or to warn against bad habits.**” (Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* III 31)

According to Maimonides, people tend naturally to be more frugal (or simply stingy) in order to protect their own resources for survival. The Torah teaches the laws of tzedakah in order to balance out this overly selfish tendency.^{xxxiv} However, a worldview that in effect dispenses with law, such as Pauline Christianity does, (unlike Aquinas and Erasmus), condemns sinners to weakness of will and the inability to repent without grace, which is the state of human nature - since the Fall - according to Orthodox Christianity.

“You know that traits without actions that root them and publicize them and perpetuate them in society are not sustainable.” (*Guide II 31*)

The abolition of law was, for Maimonides, the crime of Jesus, the Jewish heretic, for which he was justifiably executed by the Jewish courts of his era:

“This Torah, its laws and statutes, are forever and ever and may not be added to or diminished....Jesus the Nazarene thought he was the messiah and he was killed by the court ...for the prophets promised that the messiah would redeem Israel... and strengthen the mitzvot.... but this one caused Israel ...to replace the Torah...These [Jesus and Muhammed] say the mitzvot were true but now they have been abrogated.” (*Mishne Torah, Laws of Kings 11:3-4*)

In the socially conservative Christian ideology of Timothy I, which many scholars do not see as authentically Pauline, law does have a useful role to play in an unredeemed society, though it cannot be expected to fill an educational role in shaping the moral traits of good citizens as Maimonides argues following both Aristotle and the Talmudic Rabbis. For Timothy law plays an essentially negative role in controlling the lawless and unruly:

“We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.” (*Timothy 1:8-11*)

So, too, the Rabbis hold the essential but negative role of the fear of government:

Rabbi Hanina taught: "Pray for the welfare of the government, for without fear of governmental authorities people would swallow each other alive." (*Avot 3:2*)

But both Christian gospel and halakha may improve human ethics. Gospel does so with its transformative experience of Divine grace, and Jewish law, with the good habits repeated until they become second nature. That is why the Rabbis held that the function of “the Torah is to purify (*l'tzoref*) the creatures" (*Genesis Rabbah 44:1*). By contrast, for Paul, it is God’s love that can purify and redeem by rebirth in Christ.

7. Relief or Rehabilitation?

Almost all the acts of tzedakah and charity focus on interim relief of the needy through material relief of their suffering. However at the apex of Maimonides’ tzedakah rehabilitation displaces mere maintenance. The aim is to return the poor to productivity and with that remove the shame of dependence, on one hand, and enable the joy of material achievement, on the other hand. However Christian charity at its apex as embodied in Mother Teresa seeks to give spiritual comfort and spiritual meaning to their physical suffering but not to eliminate those physical and economic ailments and turn the poor into a successful producer of wealth.

Maimonides' highest rung of tzedakah empowers the poor to achieve **economic self-sufficiency** and to escape the social shame of dependence. Beyond relief and maintenance, he sets the goal of tzedakah as rehabilitation of which he believes the poor are capable by their will power and with the resources invested by the wealthy:

“The highest, supreme level of tzedakah is one who supports an Israelite who has come by hard times, by handing him a gift or a loan, or entering into a partnership with him, or finding work for him, in order to strengthen his hand, so that he would have no need to beg from other people. Concerning such the Torah says, *you are to sustain him, like a stranger or a resident, that he may live with you* (Lev. 25:35) – meaning: sustain him, so that he will not lapse into poverty.” (Gifts to the Poor 10:7-14)

Maimonides seeks rehabilitation of the individual pauper, where possible, not endless maintenance that still leaves the poor humiliated in their economic dependence. Self-respect and joy come from successful economic activity, as the Bible makes clear. In the laws about bringing the first fruits and about harvesting one's own land, we are told that farmers are and should be happy, very happy on Sukkot, the final harvest holiday (Deuteronomy 16:14). This is the joy of the *homo economicus*, the economic being, who celebrates his/her own productivity. The great curses at the end of the Torah speak of the denial of the satisfaction of enjoying the fruits of one's efforts:

You shall not prosper in your ventures...If you pay the bride price for a wife, another will enjoy her. If you build a house, you shall not live in it. If you plant a vineyard, you shall not harvest it. Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes but you shall not eat of it... until you are driven mad by what your eyes behold. (Deut. 28:29-34)

In particular the Torah mentions the first fruits of one's labor in many areas: the first year with one's spouse, the first harvest of one's grapes and first year in the house one has built. There is even an exemption from the army to enjoy these first fruits of one's own labor, lest one die in war before tasting the joy of what one's own hands have produced (Deuteronomy 20:5-7). Of course, Biblical farmers thank God for giving them the strength, land, fertility and the precipitation necessary to actualize their hard work. But that does not diminish their joy at having partnered with God in their own success.

For Pauline Christianity, on the other hand, the purpose of charity is *not* to help the failed indigents pull themselves up by their bootstraps and become economically independent. Jesus models taking on the burdens of the weak and infirm, not empowering them to carry their own weight:

“We that are stronger, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak’ (Romans 15:1) and not only as regards their being infirm, but also by bearing any other burdens of theirs with them, according to Galatians 6:2: ‘Bear you one another's burdens.’” (Aquinas)^{xxxv}

To bear burdens also means to forgive without merit. The Biblical term for forgiveness of debts or sins is “carrying a burden” (*noseh avon*). Charity constitutes an economy of free gifts, not of second chances to prove oneself worthy and productive - morally or economically. Jesus, himself, and the apostles, dispatched in the name of the risen-Christ could also **heal**^{xxxvi} the lame, make the blind see and exorcise the demons, thus solving their problems and making them physically whole and independent. However, rank and file Christians and even high church officials are not endowed with the power to do more than provide charity that relieves and comforts the poor. That is the heart of their charity. Mother Teresa^{xxxvii} practices Catholic love toward the poor as embodiments of the suffering of God incarnate, but this love is not expected to cure or rehabilitate. Note the surprising absence of any reference to curing in her account of her mission:

“We are first of all religious. We are not social workers, not teachers, not nurses or doctors. We are religious sisters. We serve Jesus in the poor. We nurse him, feed him, clothe him, visit him, and comfort him in the poor, the abandoned, the sick, the orphans, the dying: Our lives are very much woven with the Eucharist. We have a

deep faith in Jesus' Blessed Sacrament. Because of this faith, it is not so difficult to see Christ and touch him in the distressing disguise of the poor."^{xxxviii}

Thus, it is clear that Pauline charity is not about "making things" better or "solving problems" or making the poor self-supporting. Consider the model of Mother Teresa:

"Mother Teresa was indeed at odds with the devotees of secular compassion. For them, suffering is the main enemy and its eradication the final goal. In her view, however, suffering, while distressing, was necessary to the salvation of sinful human beings."^{xxxix}

In Mother Teresa's own words:

"Suffering in itself is nothing, but suffering shared with Christ's passion is a wonderful gift of human life. It is the most beautiful gift that we can share in the passion of Christ. Suffering is a sign of love because this is how God the Father proved that he loved the world-by giving his Son to die for us and expiate our sin."^{xl}

Clifford Owen sums the paradox of Mother Teresa's mission:

"One paradox in Christianity is that the imitation of Christ culminates in the practice of his charity, which aims at the alleviation of suffering - as God assumed human form to suffer [and thereby] to redeem us from sin and suffering, so are we to devote ourselves to relieve the suffering of our fellows. At the same time, the Christian cannot simply will the abolition of [this-worldly] suffering, for it is through such suffering alone that sinful humans can approach Christ."^{xli}

Thus Mother Teresa in India embodies a very different figure of charity than Maimonides' *tzedakah* model of giving loans and business advice and again different than the idealism of young adults working for NGOs to promote *tikkun olam* especially in the third world. In important ways Dorothy Day of the Catholic Workers Movement (20th C. America) has reacted against a charity that only comforts after the fact rather than one that seeks to rehabilitate or even better to preempt suffering. In her autobiography she writes first about the gap between New Testament preaching and actual Catholic practice and then about the need to promote social change in pro-active way not previously central to the Catholic tradition of charity:

"I did not see anyone taking off his coat and giving it to the poor. I didn't see anyone having a banquet and calling in the lame, the halt, and the blind. And those who were doing it, like the Salvation Army, did not appeal to me. I wanted life and I wanted the abundant life. I wanted it for others too."

"Why was so much done in remedying social evils instead of avoiding them in the first place? ... Where were the saints to try to change the social order, not just to minister to the slaves but to do away with slavery?"^{xlii}

8. "Blessed are the Poor" or The Blessings of Wealth?

Jesus declares, "Blessed are you poor" (Luke 6:20), "Blessed are you that hunger now" (Luke 6:21) and "The poor shall inherit the earth!" (Matthew 5:5).^{xliii} However, that reversal of status awaits the next world: "He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away" (Luke 1:51-53). Many early Christians expected a solution to poverty to be imminent. However, in the meantime, **economic success for the poor in this world would be a spiritual disaster for them, as it is for the rich whose access to the world-to-come depends on their alms the ever-present poor.** Mark describes

Jesus' meeting a young man who would come to the world-to-come. Jesus says, "One thing is lacking in you. Go sell what you have and give it all to the poor. Then you will have a treasure in heaven and come and follow me." But the man would not give up all his possessions. So Jesus said: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Mark 10: 25). The poor – if enriched - would end up trading their spiritual treasures for material ones. In the parable of the Rich Fool Jesus says: "Take heed and beware of all covetousness, for human life does not consist in the abundance of one's possessions" (Luke 12:13-21).

If wealth is more of a spiritual liability than a material asset, then through charity the benefactors accrue benefits, for they have divested themselves of corrupting riches.^{xliiv} Often the giving of *all* one's possessions to the poor was not primarily about helping them but about liberating oneself from the concern for money, so as to worship and serve Jesus single-mindedly:

“No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat (or drink), or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ...Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom (of God) and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.” (Matthew 6:24-34, see Luke 18:18-25; 5:30-31; Didache 1:5)²¹

That is why **wealth is a spiritual impediment to entering heaven**, like a camel entering the eye of a needle (Luke 18:25).²² That is why the poor are blessed and will inherit the kingdom of heaven, while it is “woe to you rich” (Luke 6:20-26).²³ Poverty is not something to be removed but to be cherished -- a heroic form of spiritual self-therapy.^{xliv} Not poverty but prosperity corrupts. That comes to underlie the 4th C. monastic movement that seeks to reverse the status of rich and poor: "The monks developed an ideal of mendicancy, of begging already in the 4th-6th century, in a way totally at odds with the rabbinic concern to protect the poor for dependencies and its attendant shame.”^{xlvi}

For example, Evagrius Ponticus writes of the demon of the love of money (399 CE):

“Possessions make one possessive, and hence anxious about the loss of wealth. One must develop trust in and dependence on God. **To be human is to be contingent and insecure in the face of the future.**”

²¹ Augustine reports the theology of Manichean Christians in the 4th C. who rejected any concern for one's economic future: “Do I believe the gospel? you ask me. My obedience to its commands shows that I do.... I have left my father, my mother, my wife and my children and all else that the gospel requires; and yet you ask me if I believe in the gospel. ... The gospel is nothing other than the preaching and the precepts of Christ. **I have parted with all gold and silver. I no longer carry money in my purse. I am content with daily food, neither caring nor concerned about how I shall eat tomorrow, or how I will be clothed; and yet you ask me if I believe in the gospel** ... You see me poor and meek; a peacemaker, pure in heart; mourning, hungering, thirsting, and bearing persecutions and enmity for righteousness' sake. And still you doubt my belief in the gospel?” (Augustine, *Contra Faustus*, 5.1)

²² “Numerous hadiths state that the poor will enter paradise ahead of the rich and that the majority of those in paradise will be those who were poor on earth. The riches of the wealthy, though they are acquired entirely by lawful means, are nevertheless obstacles to their salvation. Their wealth is ‘cleansed’ by acts of *sadaqat* and the payment of *zakat* (which means to purify or to justify).” (Sohail Hashimi, “The Problem of Poverty in Islamic Ethics” in W. Galston, *Poverty and Morality*, 185)

²³ “Francis combines love for the poor with two other notions that are key to understanding the **novelty** of his position. First, he feels compelled himself **to live the life of the poor**. In all the early biographies Francis insists on the poorest of garments, eschews shoes, and embraces extremes of hunger and discomfort. From early on his followers are **forbidden to take money or own real property and must rely on the goodness of others for their daily needs** ... Here, as nowhere before, the virtues reinterpreted as forms of Christian love are conjoined with the **call to work actively and in your own person on behalf of the most needy**.” (S. Davis, “Philanthropy as a Virtue,” 18)

“**Having therefore what you need for the present time, do not worry about the future**, whether that be a day, a week or some months. When tomorrow has arrived, that time will provide what is needed.”

“If you need food or clothing, do not be ashamed of accepting what others bring you, for this [shame] is a form of pride.”

“Do not desire to possess riches in order to make donations to the poor, for this is deception of the evil one that often leads to vainglory.”^{xxlviii}

Christian charity should not be aimed at economic rehabilitation that makes the poor into property owners since **the ideal is to stay poor like beggars in a monastic order and to acknowledge absolute dependence on God and the need for salvation**. The self-sufficiency or autonomy of Greek society and the human dignity of all humans created in the Divine image may lead the Christian devotee into temptation. The ideal monk^{xlvi} has given up all material possessions, like the Beghards, a Belgian order of the 13th C. whose members begged in order to humble their ego and to deny self-sufficiency.²⁴ Thus, charity need not avoid shaming the recipient by making explicit his/her dependence, for dependence admitted freely is the desired, spiritually true state of all humans before Jesus.²⁵ The Christian theologian Kent A. Van Til notes that:

“During the early years of the church, only idolatry was considered a worse sin than greed. Both greed and idolatry were ‘an attack on God's exclusive rights to human love and devotion, trust and confidence, and service and obedience.’ **The desire for self-sufficiency, as opposed to dependence on God, is widely condemned in the Christian tradition.**”^{xxlix}

The denial of self-sufficiency is related to the encouragement of the spiritually rewarding shame of dependence. Shame is a corrective to the sin of self-righteous pride for Christianity.

The Christian poor may patiently trust in Jesus’ declaration: "Blessed are your poor, for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Luke 6:20), but Jewish poor were unashamed in their desire to be rich “like Rothschild,” as Tevye puts it in the *Fiddler on the Roof*. So it is fitting that in the Geniza in Egypt, what was written atop a list of poverty-stricken people who needed a daily handout of bread was the expression of the donors’ great hope: "List of the Poor of Old Cairo, may God in his mercy **make them rich** and help them in his grace and kindness."¹

In fact, wealth may be very beneficial for spirituality. The Talmudic Rabbi Yonatan speaks of wealth as a necessary prerequisite for spiritual highs:

²⁴ “Francis of Assisi insists that **whatever good the friar performs comes not from him, but from God**. ... In a Franciscan book of guidance, the *Admonitions*, the test of the truly religious is that ‘his lower nature does not give way to **pride** when God accomplishes some good through him, and if he seems all the more worthless and inferior to others in his own eyes ... The religious who takes no more pride in the good that God says and does through him, than in that which he says and does through someone else.... That friar who loves his brother as much when he is sick and can be of **no use to him** as when he is well and can be of use to him.’ ... Christian brotherhood extends to ‘all peoples, tribes, families and languages, all nations and all men everywhere, present and to come.’” (S. Davis, “Philanthropy as a Virtue,” 18)

²⁵ St. Francis of Assisi's eloquent testimony to the monastic ideal:

“Lord, show me Poverty / whom you loved so dearly. / Merciful Jesus, Have pity on me:

I am full of yearning / For my Lady Poverty;

I can find no peace without her. You, Lord, it was who first /

Aroused love for her in my heart; Grant me the privilege / Of possessing her. I yearn to be enriched

By this treasure. / I earnestly implore you, / It may belong to me and mine forever.

Jesus, you were very poor, / and I want to call nothing under heaven mine but only to live

on what others may give me.” (“Poverty, My Only Riches” from Prayers of St. Francis)

“The Blessed Holy One does not emanate the Divine presence on anyone unless they are heroic, **rich**, wise and humble.” (TB Nedarim 38; TB Shabbat 92a)ⁱⁱ

For Maimonides, wealth is central to his whole view of the redemption of the individual through spiritual renewal and self-perfection. Wealth is not an impediment to spirituality, but a necessary instrument to achieve the learning and self-perfection necessary to merit the world-to-come as a natural outcome of spiritual refinement. That is why the Torah promises material rewards of peace and prosperity for the observance of the Torah:

“The Blessed Holy One gave us the Torah, our tree of life, and all who do all that it says and know it with complete knowledge will earn the world-to-come; according to the greatness of their actions and their wisdom, they earn it.

“So the Torah promised us that if we do the Torah with joy, good will and always behave wisely, then God will remove from us all those things that prevent us from doing that [achieving that knowledge]. For example, illness, war, famine, etc. God will pour out all goodness on us so as to strengthen our hands to do the Torah, such as prosperity, peace, much silver and gold, so that we will not be preoccupied with all the things the body needs. Rather we will be free to study wisely and do the mitzvah in order to earn the world-to-come.” (Maimonides, Mishne Torah, Laws of Repentance 9:4)

“Thus we can earn both worlds, the good life in this world which will bring us to the next world.” (Maimonides, Mishne Torah, Laws of Repentance 9:6)

“That is why all of Israel, its prophets and its persons of wisdom desired the day of the messiah, so they could rest from the [political struggles] with other kingdoms who do not give them rest to occupy themselves with Torah and mitzvot properly, so that they will find the tranquility to increase wisdom and earn the world-to-come.” (Maimonides, Mishne Torah, Laws of Repentance 9:8)

In the final laws of the whole Mishne Torah as Maimonides describes the messianic days, he repeats what he wrote in the Laws of Repentance. Thus he connects the ideal of personal, spiritual renewal with his messianic yet realistic political vision of peace and prosperity which are necessary means to democratize as much as possible the dream of individuals achieving their own spiritual world-to-come:

“Then in that era there will be no famine and no war, no jealousy and no competition, for there will be a surplus of delicacies as common as the dust. Then the only preoccupation of the whole world will be solely to know God. Therefore all Israel will be great, wise people knowing hidden things and they will comprehend their Creator’s knowledge – each according to their capability.” (Laws of Kings 12:4-5)

Achieving individual salvation, the world-to-come, will not be a gift of grace, but a human achievement producing the joy of achievement. While the recipient of Christian charity and forgiveness may feel the joy of a burden removed, of relief and of the gift of love without judgment, Maimonides envisions **a joy of self-perfection** by one’s own striving after God has provided the opportunity for such spiritual self-improvement. Similarly, the Biblical and rabbinic joy is experienced not upon the receiving tzedakah, but upon becoming self-sufficient and generative of one’s own blessing. There is a deep parallel between the relationship to Law and the relationship to poverty. For Christianity, failure to live up to the Law and failure to support oneself financially both create debt, a burden that can be removed only by an act of grace. For Biblical and Maimonidean Judaism, God gives us the Torah with complete confidence that we are adequate to live up to its demands, even if we have sinned in the past. In my judgment, we can make an analogy and say that when a donor at the highest rung invests in our business or gives us a job, even though we may have previously become bankrupt, then we have an opportunity to prove ourselves in a context of encouragement that we can repent and succeed and of material resources to make that second effort feasible.

David Hartman captures the human phenomenon of **joy of adequacy** that underlies his book's title, *Joy and Responsibility*:

“Joy is the feeling of dignity and of adequacy. Joy may be ascribed to a person who regards himself with dignity and strength. In contrast to one who feels powerless and insignificant, such a person feels joy in the belief that he has powers to act and to be creative, to direct his life and to assume responsibility for his spiritual development. The feeling of adequacy associated with this sense of joy may reflect one's attitude to oneself or may result from one's feeling of full acceptance by another....He gains a sense of dignity, he experiences himself as **one capable of assuming responsibility** and of entering into human relationships. Thus, both from a personal and from an inter-personal perspective, the notion of joy is closely related to experience of adequacy and of acceptance.”^{lii}

God, in commanding human beings to keep the Torah, implies God's faith that they can live up to the command and bear their responsibilities. It is not God's mercy that leads God to give the Torah, but his faith in Israel's ability. Even when Israel fails, God believes the community can try again and perhaps succeed this time. That is the assumption implicit in the prophetic call for repentance that earns God's favor. Such repentance is not part of the Pauline worldview, for then God's forgiving love and Jesus's self-sacrifice would not be necessary. So, too, tzedakah shows faith in regeneration, and seeks to overcome permanent helplessness. The joy of the giver at the highest level of tzedakah is the joy of empowerment and the joy of being partner in another's success, while the joy of giving charity is forfeiting one's own interests as a free gift to one who does not deserve our recognition and generosity. It is the Biblical and rabbinic faith in oneself that must be restored as a preamble to economic and moral rehabilitation. The sin of the 10 spies is not only their lack of faith in God, but as Caleb says, their lack of faith in themselves: “Let's ascend, yes, ascend and take the land as inheritance for we can, yes we can (we are capable)!” (Numbers 13:30). By contrast, Christian faith in Divine salvation begins with the admission of helplessness.

Appendix: Clement's Reappraisal of Wealth: “Rich Man's Salvation”

Clement of Alexandria (died 215) uproots the radical demand in the early Church and the New Testament (Matthew 19:21) to divest oneself of one's wealth and to transfer it to the poor. Clement preaches:

“What is this? It is not what some hastily take it to be, **a command to fling away the substance that belongs to him and to part with his riches, but to banish from the soul its opinions about riches**, its attachment to them, its excessive desire, its morbid excitement over them, its anxious cares, the thorns of our earthly existence which choke the seed of the true life.”^{liii}

For Clement, wealth is not inherently evil and it is not a temptation. Riches are either neutral or a great boon for the salvation of the rich by giving them to the poor. It is only an “instrument ... [whose] nature is to minister, not to rule.”^{liv} Rather Clement spiritualizes Christ's directive to the rich young ruler to ‘sell all you have’ and counsels him to “let a man do away, not with his possessions, but rather with the passions of his soul.”^{lv} It is the poor of spirit, not of wealth, who are blessed, for only the virtuous may be saved. This leads Clement to redefine the terms “poor” and “rich.” The “nobly rich man” is “he who is rich in virtues, and able to use every fortune in a holy and faithful manner,” whereas the “spurious rich man is he who is rich according to the flesh, and has changed his life into outward possessions.” Clement qualifies “the poor man” in a similar fashion: The “genuine poor man” is a man “poor in spirit,” as one who has “inner personal poverty,” whereas the “spurious ... poor man” is a man who is “poor in worldly goods and is rich in passions” (“Rich Man's Salvation,” #19).^{lvi}

Thus, Paul Ramsey calls Clement's sermon “the first extended argument in favour of the Christian possession of wealth,” and it “became in one form or other the classic justification for the ownership of wealth by Christians.”^{lvii}

Appendix: St. Francis of Assisi: The Ideal of Absolute Poverty²⁶ and Total Dependence

“Francis combines love for the poor with two other notions that are key to understanding the **novelty** of his position. First, he feels compelled himself **to live the life of the poor**. In all the early biographies, Francis insists on the poorest of garments, eschews shoes, and embraces extremes of hunger and discomfort. From early on his followers are **forbidden to take money or own real property and must rely on the goodness of others for their daily needs....** [Secondly] here, as nowhere before, the virtues reinterpreted as forms of Christian love are conjoined with the **call to work actively and in your own person on behalf of the most needy.** ”

“Francis of Assisi insists that **whatever good the friar performs comes not from him, but from God.** ... In a Franciscan book of guidance, the *Admonitions*, the test of the truly religious is that ‘his lower nature does not give way to **pride** when God accomplishes some good through him, and he seems all the more worthless and inferior to others in his own eyes ... The religious who takes no more pride in the good that God says and does through him, than in that which he says and does through someone else.... That friar who loves his brother as much when he is sick and can be of **no use to him** as when he is well and can be of use to him.’^{lviii}

St. Francis of Assisi's eloquent testimony to the monastic ideal is expressed beautifully in couplets:

“Lord, show me Poverty / whom you loved so dearly. /
Merciful Jesus, Have pity on me: I am full of yearning /
For my Lady Poverty; I can find no peace without her. You, Lord, it was who first /
Aroused love for her in my heart; Grant me the privilege / Of possessing her. I yearn to be enriched
By this treasure. / I earnestly implore you, / It may belong to me and mine forever. **Jesus, you were very poor,** / and I want to call nothing under heaven mine but only to live on what others may give me.”
(Poverty, "My Only Riches" from Prayers of St. Francis)

9. Sinful Self-Love or Self-Preservation?

It is common knowledge that we are all out for "no. 1" and the market economy, as conceptualized by the moralist Adam, uses the constant calculation of self-interest as the motive force of capital development. Yet Westerners pursue selfish ends with a guilty conscience maintained by their Christian heritage of original sin. Harry G. Frankfurt says in his book, *The Reasons of Love*:

“It is widely presumed that for a person to love himself is so natural as to be more or less unavoidable; but it is also widely presumed that this is not such a good thing. Many people - especially when they imagine that the propensity to self-love is both ubiquitous and essentially ineradicable - believe that this headlong tendency of

²⁶ Franciscans insisted that not only as individuals but even as a collective monastic brotherhood they reject all ownership of resources. That created some dilemmas when they needed a place for their growing brotherhood to live. The solution was found in some torturous, spiritually-motivated legal fictions, such as the following: “St. Francis and his disciples received a church ...and from the monks of St. Benedict. It was obviously intended as a gift without any annual rent. [However], insisting that the church and the land should not become the property of the [Franciscan] brothers, Francis sent the donors each year a basket full of little fish - a common form of token rent – ‘in token of his great humility and poverty.’ The donors, he implied, did not completely renounce their property rights and the brothers were therefore not its owners. At stake was not only the status of the object, but also the collective identity of its recipients.

The silent dialogue between donors and recipients did not end at that point. Every year when Francis and his men came to the donors with the fish, the Benedictine monks offered them a jar full of oil in return, for in their view, Francis had given the fish out of humility and ‘of his own free will’ [but not as rent].” (Gadi Elagazi, “Doing Things with Gifts,” summarized R. B. Brooke, *The Writings of Leo, Kutino and Angelo, Companions of St. Francis*, in Gadi Elagazi, *Negotiating the Gift*, 98-103)

most of us to love ourselves is a grievously injurious defect of human nature. Loving oneself is, they think, a serious and often crippling impediment to caring appropriately.²⁷

Frankfurt thinks this modern version of Christian original sin continues to shape Western notions of romantic selfless love. By contrast, at least in the realm of tzedakah, the chasm between one's natural inclinations and one's moral ideals has little place in the rabbinic tradition. As we saw above, Maimonides condemns those who give away too much, more than 20% of their resources. Self-preservation^{lx} from potential economic dependence on others is a primary concern and value. Hence, Maimonides is critical of extremist, hasidic personalities like monks or rabbinic figures such as of Elazar of Birta who give everything away to the poor (Laws of Character 5:12). Yet that "reckless giving" is what the Pauline narrative commends:

"God's *Agape* faces man with a decision, an inescapable Either-Or. Just because *Agape* means a **completely reckless giving, it also demands unlimited devotion**. As creative and productive of fellowship, it becomes also an annihilating judgment on the selfish life which will not let itself be re-created into a life of love and refuses the offered fellowship." (Nygren, *Eros and Agape*, 104)

The ideal Christian giver²⁸ gives everything they have now, even if they are themselves needy:

"Jesus sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins [called mites in the King James translation], which amount to a cent. Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, 'Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; **for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.**'" (Mark 12:41-44)

Not only is giving *all* one has a virtue, but calculating one's own needs and keeping enough for oneself is an awful moral crime - selfishness at the expense of the truly needy. For example, during a time of famine, St. Basil of Cappadocia, who was serving in a soup-kitchen, preached harshly against anyone who took more than a minimum for their survival needs - "self-sufficiency." He condemned the greed that leaves many destitute:

"Who then, is greedy? The one who does not remain content with self-sufficiency. Who is the one who deprives others? The one who hoards what belongs to everyone. Are you not greedy? Are you not one who deprives others? You have received these things for stewardship and have turned them into your own property! . . . The bread that you hold on to belongs to the hungry; the cloak you keep locked in your storeroom belongs to the naked. You do an injury to as many people as you might have helped with all these things!"^{lxii}

Thus Pauline and other NT traditions inaugurate a long Christian tradition of the Church Fathers who praise **self-denial** and condemn **self-love as illegitimate**.^{lxii} Augustine set self-love in his sights as the ultimate sin. So, too, Calvin says about "the precepts of love" (*Institutes* III. X.5):

²⁷ Immanuel Kant describes those who love themselves as "motivated predominantly by an interest in satisfying their own inclinations and desires, and who on any particular occasion will naturally be moved to act by whichever of those inclinations and desires happens to be the strongest." (Harry Frankfurt, *Reasons of Love*, 78)

²⁸ In contrast to Paul and Matthew, Aquinas, the great proponent of natural law, does *not* demand that one sacrifice one's necessities for the other, though he does insist that all surplus be shared when another is in need: "We are bound to give alms of our surplus, when one has superfluous goods, which one does not need for the time being, as far as he can judge with probability. Nor need he consider every case that may possibly occur in the future, for this would be to think about the morrow, which Our Lord forbade us to do (Matthew 6:34), but he should judge what is superfluous and what necessary, according as things probably and generally occur." (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, Second Part of the Second Part. Charity: Question 32*)

“That only selflessness will bring us salvation. Calvin holds that the scriptural command to esteem others *above ourselves* is one which we cannot naturally fulfill because of our fallen nature, we are wholly selfish, so we must empty the mind of what are now its natural feelings in order to act as we ought.” (III.VII.4)^{lxiii}

So, too, Kierkegaard:²⁹

“Wherever the essentially Christian is there also is **self-denial**, which is Christianity's essential form.”^{lxiv}

“Kierkegaard argues that Jesus enjoined us to love every neighbor with a form of love distinct from all naturally motivated forms of love.... Every naturally motivated form of love is preferential and that all preferential love is a form of self-love. The conclusion is that no form of naturally motivated preferential love is *Christian* love, the love that Christ enjoined. Jesus was not enjoining us to love ourselves. We already do that.”^{lxv}

By contrast, the rabbinic tradition preaches that one's own life comes first (Rabbi Akiba) and one must also take care of oneself – body and soul:

“Regarding any stumbling block that may constitute a mortal danger, there is a mitzvah to remove it and to take care from it and to be very, very careful as it says: *Beware and guard your life* (Deut. 4:9).” (Maimonides, Laws of Murderers and Guarding one's Life 11:4; See TB Brachot 32b).

For much of Christian and especially Pauline tradition, Jesus challenges his disciples to prove their love through self-sacrifice including economic self-sacrifice in almsgiving. Rabbinic Judaism also idealizes serving God with “*all one's might*,” that is, all one's wealth or all one's bodily strength, even unto death (Deuteronomy 6: 4), just as does Jesus (Mark 12:30). *You shall love YHWH your God with all your heart, with all your soul (nefesh – life), with all your might* (Deuteronomy 6:5) is associated with the greatest possible sacrifice of faith - martyrdom. Rabbi Akiba, who taught “*with all your soul* — even if God takes your soul from you” then, according to the Talmud, fulfilled his own teaching by dying a martyr's death with these words of the *Sh'ma* on his lips (TB *Berakhot* 61b). Other sages focused on the words *bekhol meodekha* — “with all your might,” explaining that it meant, “with all one's earthly wealth.” Rabbi Eliezer Ben Ya'akov asks a question which echoes the Christian logic: if one must love God even to the point of one's very life, how can a financial demand by God, like giving tzedakah, ever be too much? Logically, if it is a privilege to sacrifice one's life to God, as did Rabbi Akiba, as the purest expression of love, then shouldn't one make the ultimate sacrifice for every single mitzvah and certainly for tzedakah?

Yet while self-sacrifice is the standard for Christian charity, surprisingly the Rabbis rejected the application of the ideal of total self-sacrifice, the ultimate test of love, to every situation, especially tzedakah. For the Rabbis, only three transgressions must be avoided at the cost of one's own life. A Jew who is ordered under penalty of death to kill another person, commit sexual crimes against someone or worship false gods is commanded to refuse even though s/he will now be executed. But in most situations all other violations, including desecrating Shabbat, are not grounds for endangering one's life, for preserving life and maintaining economic viability are equally weighty religious values. Thus one need not spend more than one-third of one's wealth in fulfillment of any one mitzvah – for God wants to protect one's financial nest egg.^{lxvi} Do not give more than 20 % of your assets to tzedakah in one year, lest your own self-preservation be threatened (TB *Ketubot* 50a). This rabbinic concern to protect one's economic nest egg countermands the motif of self-sacrificial giving found in most Christian traditions.

²⁹ “In Kierkegaard's view, treating someone as one does because justice requires it is not an instance of the sort of love that Jesus requires of us. Justice, he says, 'is identified by its giving each his own, just as it also in turn claims its own' (*Works of Love*, 265). But in Christian love, the distinction between *mine* and *yours* disappears. The more it disappears, 'the more justice shudders' and 'the more perfect is the love' (*Works of Love*, 266). Agapic love is blind and deaf to what justice requires.” (N. Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, 30)

This rabbinic general principle of fiscal self-preservation as a limit on expanding resources to observe mitzvot is based on the halakhic meta-principle that “the Torah is concerned to protect Israel’s funds,” and it permits lowering the expectations of the law in order to avoid significant economic loss. It limits even voluntary pietistic desires to spend more on beautifying one’s service of God if that will cost more than one-third the normal cost of a minimum expenditure, such as the cost of an *etrog* (citron) on the holiday of Sukkot. Thus when sacrificing a Passover lamb, the Torah recommends that those who will not need a whole lamb join with their neighbors so no lamb will be wasted, since they are all leaving that night from Egypt (Exodus 12:4).^{lxvii} So, too, one may engage in some otherwise forbidden activities on holidays to avoid significant loss (*hefsed merubeh*). The 14th C. Talmudist the Meiri generalizes this principle:

“Every time a decision comes before a scholar and one might be lenient and permit some financial saving without causing disputes, then one should rely on the lenient option and one should *not* be overly pious in search of too-strict views (*humrot*). Rather one should be concerned to protect Israel’s funds, just as the Torah is concerned to protect the funds of Israel.” (Meiri on TB Hullin 49b).

Thus, the rabbinic tradition values frugality that preserves one’s economic resources over piety demonstrated through the pursuit of economically self-sacrificing religious practice even in the case of tzedakah. It is then no surprise that a Christian civilization that measures love by material self-sacrifice stereotypes Jews as overly concerned with their own material well-being at the expense of others. In this vein jokes about Jews often emphasize that “a Jew will sooner sell his mother than sustain an economic loss.” To the question, “Your money or your life?” the American Jewish comedian, Jack Benny, in one of his classic skits, responded, “Don’t rush me; I’m thinking about it.” Christians will no doubt admit that corrupted by original sin they too are selfish in practice, but at least they recognize that as their sinful nature that denies the call to *agape*. But how in good conscience can Rabbinic ethics and law command such selfishness and even prohibit selflessness in tzedakah?

Appendix: Adam Smith: In Defense of Self-Love

Given the predominate tradition of Christian ethics of selfless love, it was revolutionary for Adam Smith as a moral philosopher to defend self-love not only as natural but as the first principle for constructing a morality. R. P. Hanley illuminates Smith’s radical departure from his Christian roots: “Christian moralists have laboured to increase our sensibility to the Interests of others,” and Stoics have sought “to diminish that to our own” (TMS III.3.7-8). Smith shares their ambition to establish an equilibrium between regard for self and regard for others, yet each of their proposals on this front strikes him as unnatural. **The former, in encouraging “extreme sympathy” with distant others, promotes an “artificial commiseration” both “absurd” and “unattainable,” achievement of which would at any rate be “perfectly useless” and “produce only anxiety to ourselves, without any manner of advantage to them”** (TMS III.3.9). The misguidedness of such artificial compassion is rivaled only by the “unnatural indifference” encouraged by the Stoics (TMS III.3.13).^{lxviii}

“The plan and system which Nature has sketched out for our conduct seems to be altogether different from that of the Stoical philosophy” (TMS VI.ii.1.43). Stoicism denies our natural self-loving tendencies to attend to “everything which Nature has prescribed to us as the proper business and occupation of our lives” (TMS VII.ii.1.46). Their endorsement of suicide provides the most obvious point of contention; in light of his insistence on the first-order **duties of self-preservation**, Smith can hardly but consider such an endorsement as “a refinement of philosophy” and “perhaps the highest exertion of human vanity and impertinence” - the fruit of a “species of melancholy” foreign to “Nature, in her sound and healthful state” (TMS VII.ii.i.33-34). The Stoic’s cosmopolitan desire for “the greatest possible happiness of all rational and sensible beings” leads him to prefer the distant and unrealizable to our naturally primary concern, “the events which immediately affect that little department in which we ourselves have some little management and direction” (TMS VII. ii. 1.21, 44):^{lxix}

“Smith highlights **the centrality of self-love to our sympathetic attachments** in two discrete instances in the account that follows. He claims that **our debts to our benefactors trump all others**. Here Smith argues that, of all those to whom our beneficence is owed, ‘there are none to whom it seems more properly directed than to those

whose beneficence we have ourselves already experienced' (TMS VI.ii.1.19). Such a conception of gratitude as founded on reciprocal obligations is itself striking, but what is most important here is the claim that reciprocal beneficence is grounded in our attachment to that which promotes the interests prompted by self-love. The same point is reiterated in Smith's discussion of patriotism ...Patriotism can redirect ignoble and vulgar forces of self-love to greater objects, thereby ennobling the passion itself.²⁹

10. Pure Motives or Practical Results?

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth; they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." - Jesus, Matthew 6:1-4

"For there to be a gift, there must be no reciprocity,³⁰ return, exchange, counter-gift, or debt. If the other gives me back or owes me, or has to give me back what I give him or her, there will not have been a gift." - Jacques Derrida, French Sephardi deconstructionist philosopher

In charity, as a gift of love, "**the thought is what counts.**" The motivation³¹ of the giver, not the need of recipient, is key. It is the inner, not the outer, that counts religiously:

"For the Jew is not [ultimately] the one conspicuously known to be [a Jew], nor is the one known to be circumcised in the flesh thereby necessarily the ideal Jew. Rather a person is a Jew who is such inwardly and circumcision is by spirit [made manifest in the way one lives] and not by inscription [by a mere cut in the flesh]. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God." (Romans 2:28-29)³²

For the thought³³ to count it must be altruistic, not selfish. Paul says:

³⁰ "Love towards God does not seek to gain anything. It most certainly does not seek to gain anything other than God. But neither does it seek to gain even God Himself or His love. The very thought of gaining anything, even of gaining God's love, is fundamentally alien to it. It is the free - and in that sense - spontaneous surrender of the heart to God. When God gives His love freely and for nothing, there remains nothing for man to gain by loving God. His love for God loses the character of a deserving achievement and becomes pure and unfeigned." (Nygren, *Eros*, 94)

³¹ The Rabbis, however, did often credit a mitzvah act even if it lacked proper *kavanah*, intention. The most striking example of an act of tzedakah which is attended by no positive motivation is *shikhikha*, where one is commanded not to retrieve a sheaf ... if one forgot it there. Leave it for the poor to claim. Rashi comments on Deut. 24:19 that "even though this opportunity to do a mitzvah came to you unintentionally, you will be blessed. Thus a midrash attributes a mitzvah to someone who drops a coin by accident, if a poor person claims it, so one who loses coins to the poor will be blessed." (Deuteronomy 24:19 in Sifrei #283; see Sifra 5; Chapter 17)

³² This more literal translation is based on the commentary of Mark Nanos (*The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 259), but it is more colloquially translated: "The true Jew is not one who is such in externals, neither is the circumcision the external mark in the flesh. The true Jew is one who is such inwardly, and the true circumcision is of the heart, directed not by written precepts but by the spirit. Such a one receives high commendation not from men but from God" (Romans 2:28-29).

³³ Whether pure motives do or do not count for Protestant alms was debated in England among clerics. On one hand, Rev. John Stockwood attacked Catholic charity for lack of inward motives:

"Almes ... doth not consist in the greatnesse of that which is bestowed, but in the minde and disposition of the giver. . . . All the large givings of the Papists, of whiche at this daye many make so greate bragges, bycause they be not done in a reverent regarde of the commaundement of the Lorde, in Love, and of an inwarde being touched with the calamities of the needie, but for to be well reported of before men whilst they were alive, and to be praised for after they are dead, . . . are indeede no almes, but Pharisaiicall trumpets." (John Stockton, *A Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse on Barthelmew Day*, 1578)

"If I give away all my possession and if I hand over my body to be burned,³⁴ but have not love, I am nothing."
(Corinthians I 13:3, 13)

Donors ought to have no regard for their fame. Avoid the sin of putting their name on the building,^{lxxi} lest their "good act" become a sin, since the test of true charity must be its purity of intention.^{lxxii}

The New Testament and Rabbinics scholar Herbert Basser explains how Matthew's negative stance on secret giving may emerge from his interpretation of Micah 6:8 in a way parallel to one rabbinic midrash (TB Sukkot 49b):

"The verse that underlies Matthew 6 is Micah 6:8, *God has shown you, what is good. And what does YHWH require of you? To act justly (mishpat) and to love mercy and to walk (hatsneah - modestly) with your God.* The word *hatsneah* / 'hidden' means 'to do something modestly and in private.'^{lxxiii} Rabbi Elazar (3rd C. CE) brings a series of *midrashim* commending tzedakah as the highest mitzvah and urging that tzedakah be given in secret based on this verse, emphasizing doing mitzvot that are meant to be secret in secret, such as 'tzedakah which is given to the poor in secret that need not be announced to any other human being' (Rashi on TB Sukkah 49b)."

So Basser suggests that Matthew should be read as follows:

"Take care not to perform your righteousness (*tzedakah*) before people, in order to be seen by them. ... When you give alms (*tzedakah*), do not blow a trumpet to announce your presence as the 'impersonators' (hypocrites) do in the synagogues and in the streets, in order to receive people's praise, Amen. I say to you, they have received their reward." (based on Matthew 6:1-2)

Basser explains that Matthew means "hypocrite" in a particular sense:

"The word for 'impersonators' in the Greek is *hupocritai* - hypocrites - and for Matthew 6:2 the 'hypocrites' are those who make a very public display of their alms-giving. That is, the type of hypocrite to which Matthew refers here is not the one who seeks monetary gain by way of a pretense, and which the Rabbis knew as *hanafim*; nor is it the one who harshly condemns others but who is also a sinner himself. Rather, the type of hypocrite to which Matthew refers is known as the *yahir* ("haughty" and/or "arrogant").^{lxxiv} That is captured by the rabbinic term, *gassei ruah* (presumptuous, haughty).^{lxxv}

Thus, **pride**, the chief motive of Greek philanthropy, is the most deadly of the seven deadly sins for St. Gregory (7th C.), for it returns us to the sin of the Fall in the Garden of Eden thinking we could be godlike. The same spirit of modesty in charity work mandated the preferred anonymity of giving that animated American Catholics until the 1950s when American norms of philanthropy overwhelmed traditional Catholic teaching:

"The call of early twentieth-century bishops for all parishioners to contribute to charity through annual diocesan-wide collections accorded with the church's traditional emphasis on the **spiritual merits of anonymous giving**. However, after 1950, many very rich Catholics had little enthusiasm for giving anonymously, especially for projects that the hierarchy rather than they themselves identified as worthy of support. They preferred to give publicly and to designate their gifts. In return for major financial gifts, they thought it entirely appropriate that the church publicize and reward their benevolence with coveted papal titles and other high ecclesiastical honors.

But in the 19th C. Thomas Fuller sought to make philanthropy virtuous in its own right, regardless of the motives. Even if benefactors "having lived like wolves, turn lambs on their death beds by giving a handsome benefaction. 'Charity,' saith the Apostle, 'thinketh no evil.'" (Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England*, Vol. I 52 cited in Mordechai Feingold, "Philanthropy, Pomp, and Patronage: Historical Reflections upon the Endowment of Culture" in *Daedalus* Vo. 116 no. 1, 162)

³⁴ Alternative manuscripts say: "so that I may not boast" instead of "burned" or "punished."

"Fearing that church needs would suffer if they rebuffed such expectations from this rapidly growing and powerful segment of parishioners, bishops and clergy preached less often about the religious merits of anonymous giving. They justified the bestowal of public honors on major financial donors by contending that it was a splendid way to inspire observers of every social class to give more generously themselves. Many grassroots laity, however, saw the expansion of the practice to be a troubling sign that secular values were threatening the traditional democratic spirit of Catholic philanthropy."^{lxxvi}

Greek and Rabbinic tradition distinguish between the positive aristocratic trait, which might be translated "pride" (Greek, *megapsychia*- great spiritedness, and Rabbinic *kavod*) and such an extremely pejorative trait, arrogance (Greek, *hubris*, and rabbinic *ga'ava*), while Christianity does not make such a distinction.

In Rabbinic Judaism, as we have seen with Mar Ukba and Maimonides, anonymity of giving is first and foremost important in order to avoid shaming the recipient. If one's mixed motives in giving spill over into shaming the poor, then their value is wholly vitiated:

"Rav Shabbetai b. Meir ha-Kohen (the Shakh, 17th C.) distinguishes between the frustration experienced by the donor, which is kept to himself, and that which is expressed to the recipient. If the latter, his action still qualifies minimally as tzedakah. If he expresses his resentment, even by so much as a sullen look, it is not accounted even minimally as tzedakah."^{lxxvii}

Yet anonymity also contributes to making the act of tzedakah a higher spiritual achievement (*mitzvah lishma*) for the giver who is then unsullied by arrogance. The Rabbis agreed in principle with the New Testament that the higher rabbinic Jewish piety of giving is not for public self-promotion as in Greek-Hellenistic culture, which they condemned for its obsession with *philotimeia*, love of fame:

Rabbi Eliezer says: "All the tzedakah and *hesed* performed by the nations is a sin to them for they do it for no other reason than to make themselves appear great." (TB Baba Batra 10b)³⁵

Still, giving to which one's name is attached is for the Rabbis still the fulfillment of a mitzvah. In polemicizing against those who denigrate contributions made for less than altruistic reasons, they state their case very provocatively:

"One who says: 'This *selah* weight of silver is donated to tzedakah, so my children will live and so I will merit the world-to-come' is **completely righteous!**" (TB Baba Batra 10b; Pesachim 8:1)

Generally, rabbinic culture accepts the value of good deeds done for mixed motives:

³⁵ A Lurianic mystical tradition has interpreted Rabbi Eliezer's chauvinist critique of Judah's oppressor and enemy, the Greco-Roman Empire, and his condemnation of their philanthropic activities for their cities, in a metaphysical and racist way. In the *Tanya* Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi says: "**The souls of the nations of the world, however, emanate from the Radical Other, *Sitra Ahra*, unclean *kelipot* which contain no good whatever**, as is written in Haim Vital's *Etz Chayim* (Portal 49, ch. 3) that 'all the good that the nations do is done out of selfish motives.'"

"Since their type of soul/ *nefesh* emanates from *kelipot*/ external shells which contain no good, it follows that any good done by them is for selfish motives. So it says in TB Baba Batra 10b: 'The kindness of the nations is sin' — that all the tzedakah and kindness done by the nations of the world is only for their self-glorification. When a Jew acts in a benevolent manner he is motivated mainly out of concern for the welfare of his fellow. The proof of this is that were his fellow not to need his help, this would give him greater pleasure than the gratification derived from his act of kindness. Concerning the nations of the world, however, this is not so. Their motivation is not the welfare of their fellow; rather, it stems from a self-serving motive — the desire for self-glorification, a feeling of gratification, and the like.

"It should be noted that among the nations of the world there are also to be found those whose souls are derived from *kelipat nogah* - called 'the pious ones of the nations of the world,' these righteous individuals are benevolent not out of selfish motives but out of a genuine concern for their fellow." http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/7880/jewish/Chapter-1.htm
The Tanya of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, elucidated by Rabbi Yosef Wineberg

"One should always engage in Torah and good deeds even if it is not for their own sake." (TB Nazir 23b)

The medieval Tosafot explain:

"Even if it is only to glorify oneself and gain recognition for oneself." (Tosafot on TB Nazir 23b)

A hierarchy must be maintained between higher and lower motives for tzedakah. Consider the spiritualizing understanding of tzedakah proposed by Rav David, grandson of Maimonides and son, of Maimonides' son Rav Abraham the Jewish Sufi. Rav David is very concerned with higher motivations of spirituality, and he comments on the Mishna about types of givers of tzedakah (Avot 5: 13) as follows:

"Our Rabbis have said that tzedakah may be compared to three things: There is tzedakah which is like gold, tzedakah which is like silver, and tzedakah like copper.

"The tzedakah which is like gold is that which one does anonymously, when one considers the poor and gives them money with dignity, so that the receiver does not feel ashamed or degraded. This is the kind of tzedakah of which King Solomon said '*A gift in secret pacifies anger*' (Prov. 21:14). [There is an acrostic for the word 'gold' (*zahav*) in the Hebrew words for 'he who gives secretly']. Tzedakah which is likened to silver is tzedakah which is not a credit to its giver, because one gives it when sick, or in danger, out of fear and despair. [The Hebrew word 'silver' (*kesef*) is an acrostic for: 'when he sees danger, he opens his purse'.]

"Copper is when a person was never kind to the poor, but at the end of his life, he or she feels death is near and his wealth will be left to others, so he commands his household to distribute his money to tzedakah ['Copper' – *nehoshet* in Hebrew - is an acrostic for: 'the sick man says give']."
(Midrash David, commentary on Pirkei Avot by Rabbi David, the grandson of Maimonides)

The Talmudist Menachem HaMeiri (13th C. Provence) is more demanding of purity of motive, so he dismisses the value of tzedakah which is solely for the sake of self-aggrandizement, for that turns the mitzvah into sin:

"There is a lowest level of tzedakah that does not deserve to be counted when someone gives to acquire a name for themselves, to become great and to advertise himself thereby. This is not the way of Israel but rather a very, very despicable trait. **Not only doesn't it count as tzedakah but it counts as a sin.**"

Still, he believes he can harmonize his pietistic conception with the provocative Talmudic statement that recognizes the value of giving as a talisman to promote one's child's health:

"Nevertheless, [the Talmud teaches that] one who gives in order to earn a prize such as one who says: 'This *selah* weight of silver is donated to tzedakah, so my children will live and so I will merit the world-to-come,' or so that my success will continue, that is called **complete tzedakah**." (Meiri on source TB BB 10b)³⁶

Purity of motive is desirable and pure self-aggrandizement is a sin,^{lxxviii} but such mixed motives are acceptable and absolute purity is not a necessary condition of tzedakah.

The concern for purity of intention in service of God is a major concern within the Sufi tradition and hence in the Sufi-Jewish dialogue pursued by Bahya and Maimonides, among others. In "*The Gate of Ikhlas*" of *The*

³⁶ This contradiction is resolved by the Meiri as follows: "As long as it is not given *solely* on that condition [that its wish for self-glorification will come true], otherwise one might regret having given tzedakah at all because it did not help me. [Then it is as if] the tzedakah money is more like the fee paid to a doctor [only on condition that it have particular effect as a treatment for long life, and in that case it is not tzedakah at all]." (Meiri on source TB BB 10b)

Obligations of the Heart, Bahya names purity of worship *ikhlas*, which means the process of purifying one's service of God from hypocrisy – the concern for praise from others – and in general from pursuit of reward. One ought to seek to achieve the ideal of the ancient sage Antigonos of Sokho who says: “Do not be like a servant who serves the Master for the sake of reward, but be like a servant who serves not for the sake of reward” (Avot 1:3).

For most Sufis – Jewish and Muslim – one may still permit a degree of self-promotion in religious actions as long as one is on the way to greater purity of service. However, one most extreme Muslim Sufi group, the Malamati movement, urges one to refrain from religious acts if they are done in public, lest it generate praise and hence arouse the evil inclination that sullies the pure intention. Diana Lobel in her book, *The Sufi-Jewish Dialogue*, explicates the background for the internal Sufi debate on the purity of service:

“One must overcome hypocrisy by casting off all external religious practices. If the problem is **religious exhibitionism**, the solution is to not to display one's piety. The inclination goads us, telling us that pure devotion to God (*ikhlas*) cannot be achieved until we abandon all hypocrisy. The way to destroy all hypocrisy directed at other people is to hide our actions from them and show them the opposite of what is in our heart. When we pray, we should make our prayers short, so that no one will notice our effort and devotion. When we study, we should do so in private, so that none will know except God. The seeker should actually aim at seeming negligent and slow in the performance of religious duties, lest he or she become celebrated for piety, which can lead one to act with **mixed motivations**. We should hide our knowledge rather than teach others. We should not act as a religious model, showing fear of God, lest we be honored for it. Instead, we should eat and drink with all kinds of people, not guarding ourselves against lying, swearing, and gossip. In short, we should do everything to avoid being seen as a pious person....The Malamatiyya live on ‘two planes.’ Outwardly they may appear quite ordinary, while inwardly their whole being is directed toward intimacy with God.”^{lxxxix}

But Bahya and Maimonides reject this extreme approach that invalidates all religious acts performed with mixed motives, even though they consider such acts of devotion, such as tzedakah given to earn public praise, as a lower form of service of God:

“Bahya, while not mentioning the Malamatiyya by name, criticizes the approach of hiding one's deeds as itself a trap of the ego. The correct response is to challenge the inclination. We must stand up for our piety and argue, as it were: ‘See here! I avoid praise and honor to escape self-glorification in the eyes of others, and here you [my inclination] come and order me to glorify myself for them, in addition to neglecting obedience to God!’

"Bahya concedes that we should be modest in our actions, hiding those that we can perform without others knowing about them. However, it is not proper to neglect actions that cannot be carried out without the knowledge of others - such as praying in public, teaching the truth, doing good deeds - for fear of hypocrisy. On the contrary, we are obliged to do these actions for the sake of God. If we happen to be praised and honored for them, this does not necessarily efface their value or deprive us of reward, as long as our intent is the pure service of God and not human praise or honor.”^{lxxx}

However, Bahya does take a more radical stance on purity of motivation when one discovers that one's own devotion is tainted. In that case, it is better to postpone the good act until your inner being is purified. Listen to his self-test for good deeds to be performed in public:

“It has been said that when you perform an act that people are aware of, and want to determine whether your intention in doing it is pure, you can test it in two ways. First, you must determine what kind of reward you are hoping for, and from whom. If it is [a reward] from God, your action is pure; if it is from someone else, it is not pure. The second way is to determine within yourself whether you would have acted in the same way in this circumstance had you been alone. If your answer is yes, your action is indeed done purely for God and you should continue to act thus. **But if this is not so, put it aside, until your inner being is purified, doing it for God.**” (*Hovot HaLevavot* V 5)

Diana Lobel concludes:

“While Bahya does not delineate a clear hierarchy in the duties of the heart, his discussions of *ikhlas* [purity of motive] do suggest a certain ladder. At the lowest level of religious life, people direct their religious life to worldly rewards: fame, recognition, the praise of others. The second level, the first level of *ikhlas*, signals that we direct our acts to God alone. If we seek reward, we seek reward from God alone. An even higher level is the level at which we seek no reward, only the satisfaction of God's will. *Ikhlas* is a process of purification that suggests these successive stages of religious life.”^{lxxxix}

That modulated approach to purifying one's motives is almost identical with Maimonides' own ladder of rising purity of motivation on the way to doing things for their own sake. For Maimonides one cannot expect to reach purity all at once, not because our nature is fallen, nor because our inclinations are all-powerful, but rather the imperfection of knowledge of God and hence the good. So one may transcend the selfishness that seeks conspicuous public displays of generosity by reaching greater levels of philosophic learning in so far as it is age-appropriate:

“When a young boy is brought to his teacher to learn Torah, which is the great good that will lead to perfection, the boy with his lack of years and weakness of mind does not know that virtue of that good nor what it will procure for him from perfection. Therefore the teacher, who is more perfect than he, will of necessity have to prompt him to study by offering him things that he loves appropriate to his young age. He will say to him: Read and I will give you nuts or figs or some honey. Then he will read and exert himself not for the sake of reading – whose virtue he does not know – but so that they will give that food...

"When he grows and his mind is stronger and he will value lightly that which was once highly honored in his estimation before and now he loves something else, then they will prompt him and arouse his desire with that which is now beloved. The teacher will say to him: Read and I will give you beautiful shoes or precious clothes like these.....

"And when he is more perfect in mind and he despises those things... Then the teacher will say: Learn this section or chapter and I will give you one dinar or two dinars....

"And when his mind is perfect, and when he comes to despise that monetary value, then he will desire that which is more honorable, and the teacher will say: Learn, so you can be a rabbi, a judge, and people will honor you, stand before you and obey your commands, and your name will be great in this life and after death like so-and-so. ...That kind of learning is called by the Rabbis: 'not for its own sake (*lo lishma*).'

"But there is no *telos* to wisdom... except solely to know it....Believe the truth because it is the truth. And this is called 'worshipping from love (*oveid mei-ahava*).'" (Maimonides, Introduction to *Perek Helek*, Mishna Sanhedrin 10)

Mixed motives, for Maimonides, do not vitiate the whole value of the mitzvah. Worshipping God as an instrumental pursuit to receive material benefits is still worshipping God, even if it is only motivated by fear:

“The masses do not lose anything by doing the mitzvot out of fear of punishment and hope for reward, but they are not perfect. Yet it is good for them until they shall have the capacity, the habit and the exertion in doing the Torah and from that they will be aroused to know the truth and become worshippers from love.....As the Rabbis say: 'One should study Torah even if not for its own sake, for from acts not motivated for their own sake one comes to acts motivated for their own sake' (TB Pesachim 50b).” (Maimonides, Introduction to *Perek Helek*, Mishna Sanhedrin 10)

These actions motivated by impure motives are still positive and good, even if, as Bahya emphasizes, on the path to purified service of God, such self-aggrandizing gifts may be harmful. For Bahya the spiritual goal is to

submit to God out of honor for God, the benefactor who is rational and hence good to his creatures, which means God is worthy of being honored, not out of desire of the worshippers for these benefactions. Maimonides adds that one ought to act for the sake of truth as inspired by one's intellectual knowledge of God, which is simultaneously love of God.

The Rabbis themselves debated whether to condemn giving that was solely motivated by self-glorification, but they never condemned giving with a mixture of generous and ulterior motives. Some, like the Meiri, as we saw above, and Rabbi Moshe Isserles, rule that in principle:

“One should *never glorify oneself for giving tzedakah* for s/he will lose his or her merit and incur the sin of bragging.” (Shulkhan Arukh Yoreh Deah 249:13)

The Zohar also condemns self-aggrandizing donations:

"Woe to those who build massive synagogues to show off their wealth because they are glory seekers like the builders of the Tower of Babel, who wanted to make a great name for themselves." (Genesis 11:4 in Zohar Genesis 25b)^{lxxxii}

Yet Rabbi Hiyya, while raising money for building a beit midrash, sat next to the donor who gave a liter weight of gold in order to honor him publicly (Jerusalem Talmud Horayot 3:4)^{lxxxiii} On that basis, in 13th C. Spain the Rashba, Shlomo Aderet, rules "it is a permissible and ancient tradition to put up a plaque for a donation" (Responsa 581).^{lxxxiv lxxxv 37}

A true anecdote may capture the intuitive differences often felt to distinguish American Jewish fundraising from mainline Protestant patterns of fundraising in America. Once, a dedicated Jewish philanthropist in Columbus, Ohio, reported how she had tried to teach all she had learned about effective fundraising in the Jewish Federation to her friends who were to embark on conducting a major campaign to fund a new wing to the local Lutheran hospital. She suggested they solicit funds by specifying sums that one ought to give according to one's income level. To show how the volunteers soliciting gifts had cared enough to make their own contributions, they might reveal how much they had given to set a good example of personal responsibility. The gifts might be acknowledged by offering names to be displayed on a plaque in the grand entryway of the new hospital building – listing the biggest donors more prominently. But the Lutheran volunteers on this committee were aghast. They would not feel comfortable telling people how much to give or revealing to them, as is typical in Jewish campaigns, how much they themselves had contributed. They certainly could not suggest to them that their charity be trumpeted in public by putting a name on a wall. That would undermine a selfless act

³⁷ “In Islamic belief, the basis of all religious acts is intention (*niyya*) and without true intentions, actions like prayer or almsgiving are null and void. *Niyya* is the aim of **performing an act well, in obedience to God's commandment, as a result of sincere belief**. Just as *kavvana* is central to prayer and good deeds for Jews, *niyya* is a crucial aspect of any Muslim ritual or act regulated by *shari'a*, distinct and occurring prior to the act itself, emphasizing the constant presence of God as a witness to the acts of individuals. The ninth-century jurist al-Bukhari (d. 870), who compiled one of the great canonical collections of *hadith*, said at the beginning of his collection: **‘Works are only rendered efficacious by their intention.**’ Thus any benefit to the giver is canceled out if *zakat* is paid insincerely or begrudgingly, as a result of social pressure or concerns for personal salvation.

“A long section (2:261-81) in the second *sura* of the Qur'an discusses how people should give properly. Givers should neither boast of their acts of charity nor shame the recipients. Behavior of this kind voids the act of its worth, and demonstrates only that the giver does not truly believe in God. Obviously, this would apply equally to public bragging and private self-satisfaction, since God is All-knowing. Yet even as it recognizes the risks of self-promotion and favors secret giving, the Qur'an also admits the merits of public donations. **‘If you publish your freewill offerings, it is excellent; but if you conceal them, and give them to the poor, that is better for you, and will acquit you of your evil deeds; God is aware of the things you do’** (2:271). Furthermore, whatever is given should be ‘of the good things you have earned’ and not from whatever a person would not keep for personal use. Charity is not meant to be a dumping ground for inferior or damaged goods.” (A. Singer, *Charity*, 57, 59)

of love and turn it into a sin of boastful pride. It was impossible to tell people how much they ought to give, lest charity be turned into an obligation rather than a free-will offering of love.

A joke once told me by a Lutheran minister may illuminate the special sensibility of Lutherans to self-promoting charity. This characteristic joke begins with three clergymen who met in hell and began to ask each other: for what sin were you condemned? The Catholic priest admitted to fornication with an altar boy, the rabbi to eating pork on Yom Kippur. But what did the Lutheran minister do wrong, they asked. He answered, hanging his head in shame: "I did a good deed...and I was proud of it." Unlike the Greeks, a Lutheran would concur with what a Christian poet wrote: **"Who builds a Church to God and not to Fame, Will never mark the marble with his name."** In stark contrast to Christian charity, the Meiri (13th C. Talmud commentator from France) identifies the rabbinic principle: **"The act of tzedakah is greater than the actor,** so that even though one is forced to give and it is not a voluntary gift of the heart, it is still a credit to them as tzedakah."³⁸

The difference between the Rabbis and the Church Fathers regarding the necessity of having purity of motives may illuminate the spat between the Mets and the Yankees regarding the way they publicize their charitable contributions:

"The Yankees and the Mets, the same baseball teams that tangled in last year's World Series, found themselves engaged last week in a different sort of skirmish. Shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on New York's Twin Towers, the Mets announced that each player on the team, as well as its coaches and manager, would donate a day's salary to a fund for victims of the catastrophe. The contribution amounted to about \$450,000.

"The next day, several members of the Yankees implicitly criticized the Mets, saying such donations should be private. 'The giving is about what's in your heart,' Yankees manager Joe Torre told reporters: 'We don't feel like it's really anybody's business.' Then Bobby Valentine, the manager of the Mets, responded that his club had every right to publicize its gifts because baseball players are role models. Publicity might encourage others to contribute."^{xxxvi}

The Jewish journalist reporting this spat in the Wall Street Journal in 2001 was reminded of what he had learned about Maimonides on the ladder of tzedakah motivations:

"When Maimonides created his ladder, he did not speak of charity. The Hebrew word that comes closest is tzedakah, the root of which means justice or righteousness. According to this definition, acts of tzedakah are not a matter of choice. They're required. Not to give is more than uncharitable; it is unjust. Maimonides and his ladder remind us that justice is served best when acts of kindness are focused on preserving the dignity of the needy, not on boosting the image of the giver. But the rabbi never meant to discourage acts of charity that fell short of his highest rungs.

³⁸ **Tzedakah that "Launder" Stolen Goods:** "It is forbidden to derive any benefit from property obtained by robbery" (Mishne Torah, Laws of Robbery and Lost Objects 5:1-2)

When are ulterior motives so illegitimate that tzedakah may not be accepted? The Mishna Sukkah 3:1 states the following: "A stolen *lulav* is invalid." Rabbi Obadiah ben Abraham (Bertinoro) explains that it is forbidden to use the stolen *lulav* because of the ban on performing a good deed through a sinful act, *Mitzvah ha'baah min ha'Aveirah*.

Sefer ha-Hinukh Mitzvah 429 adds: "That we should not attach anything from all an idolatrously-worshipped object to our possessions or bring it into our domain in order to benefit from it as it says, *And you shall not bring an abomination into your house* (Deuteronomy 7:26)... Included also in this prohibition is the rule that **a man should not attach to the possessions which God has graciously given him in righteousness, other possessions acquired by robbery, forced purchase, interest charges, or by any ugly repugnant business** - for all this is included under things that serve in idolatry, which the evil inclination of a man's heart covets, and he thus brings them into his house."

The Mets might have scored higher if they hadn't publicized their donations, but by no means do they deserve criticism. What matters is that those inclined to give did so in whatever manner they thought best. The only certain failure would have been indifference.^{»lxxxvii}

10. Overflowing Love or Thoughtful Priorities?

Both charity and tzedakah are deeply moved by emotions – love or empathy or righteous indignation about injustice. But how does that emotional sensitivity relate to the rational analysis of needs and priorities? Classical Christian charity before the Reformation – except for Aristotelian Aquinas – is, in principle, indiscriminate and nonjudgmental. The early church manual of conduct instructs: "Give to everyone who asks" (Didache 1.5). So, too, the Byzantine monk, "Abba Isaiah advised monks regarding questionable beggars: 'Do not send him off empty-handed, but give him the *eulogia* you received from God, knowing that whatever you have is from God.'^{»lxxxviii lxxxix}

However, tzedakah, when collected and distributed by tzedakah *gabbaim*, often themselves rabbis, ought to manifest a process of reason, objectivity, impartiality, and justice as well as practicality and long-range assessment of results. Priorities ought to be set and individuals as well as communal bureaucrats are expected to consult the law of Rabbinic priorities among the various needy.

This difference of emphasis is highlighted in Adam Smith's insightful *Theory of Moral Sentiments (TMS)*. Adam Smith seeks to combine, on one side, sympathy for the other's pain, and on the other, the objectivity of the impartial spectator. One must be aware that the human faculties of imagination, the hypothetical, can be helpful in leading us to imagine the pain of others ("for you were a stranger in Egypt and you know the heart of the stranger") and that evokes powerful emotions motivating giving and helping. One also imagines what others may be thinking of my behavior. Yet one must control exaggerated emotions and spontaneous acts of caring that may adversely affect questions of allocations, scarcity, and eligibility. It is the painful emotion of shame and the desire for honor before society's objective judgment that restrains emotions of selfishness and its opposite, indiscriminate, selfless love.³⁹

Smith notes that love in general, and Christian love (*agape* or *caritas*) as well, call for the suspension of judgments about the interests of the giver and the worthiness of the recipient.

"The common feeling of love is so strong that no impartial view intrudes. While typically sympathy creates a need to consider the particular other as well as the imagined impartial view, between lovers sympathy is so complete that it destroys rather than creates impartiality. I judge my lover without any distance between us."^{»xc}

³⁹ "Sympathy, in Smith's work, names that function of human psychology by which I imaginatively, even against my will, enter into other people's situations, including the situation of observing me: I cannot actually feel another's feeling because my sensations are sealed within my own body. But I am profoundly affected by other people's feelings in my imagination. This sympathy is therefore the source of both **compassion** (as I imagine another's feelings) and **vanity** [and shame] (as I imagine another looking at me)... Only when one comes into some society and begins to judge others through his power of imagining himself in their places would he realize that others do the same to him. At this moment, he would learn to see himself through their eyes and to judge his own actions [**objectivity or impartiality and hence rational moral judgment**]. Or rather, his innate sympathy with others leads him to see himself from the viewpoint of an imagined **impartial spectator**.

"Moral discernment is the process of negotiating between his **feelings** and the way an idealized informed stranger would see him [rational objectivity and self-control]. This 'outside' or impartial view causes him to moderate the expression of feelings and to act in a way others could approve. Achieving this approval, a harmony in sentiments, is the goal of human relations." (Kelly Johnson, *The Fear of Beggars*, 103)

Smith would agree with Maimonides' harsh criticism of the spontaneous, spendthrift *hasid* who gives away everything, to any and every needy applicant, without regard for the long-term results or the overall societal priorities, including his or her own self-preservation. (This will be discussed in depth in chapter 11.) Maimonides would have concurred with Smith's evaluation of the "melancholy moralists" who carry "*love your neighbor as yourself*" too far:

"Smith commented on certain philosophers who teach people to 'feel for others as we naturally feel for ourselves.... [These] are those whining and melancholy moralists, who are perpetually reproaching us with our happiness, while so many of our brethren are in misery' (Adam Smith, *TMS*, III. i.3.9). Smith found this approach absurd and impossible."^{xci}

Where Adam Smith and Maimonides part ways significantly concerns their attitudes to beggars. In rabbinic sources I have never seen any text warn against the "irrationality" of compassion that leads one to be too soft-hearted toward a beggar. The rabbis would never condemn the needy for exposing their real needs to the givers to arouse their compassion - unless they were charlatans not really in need. But like his contemporaries, Adam Smith saw the beggar as exploiting the emotional faculty of natural sympathy in a theatrical performance which constitutes emotional extortion:

"The beggar rouses the sympathy of passersby even beyond the sympathy they would willingly give. Persons of delicate fibres and a weak constitution of body complain that in looking on the sores and ulcers which are exposed by beggars in the streets, they are apt to feel an itching or uneasy sensation in the correspondent part of their own bodies." (Smith, *TMS*, Li.i.3)

"These beggars strive to cause sufficient discomfort in observers that they will give alms to relieve their own sympathetic suffering. Tugging on the cords of sympathy, the beggar can drag the attention of the 'weak' to him- or herself.... Beggars who actively appeal for our compassion and those moralists who urge others to have compassion must understand that the only noble solution to the problem of our distance from each other's suffering is for poor persons to conceal their pain so that it is less of an imposition on others, while the rich generously extend themselves, freely rather than under the influence of manipulated sympathy."^{xcii}

Adam Smith would have agreed with the 19th C. Reverend Thomas Malthus who condemned the pernicious effects of uncritical benevolence:

"Benevolence is, in Malthus' categories, a passion, and therefore needs the direction of prudence. As benevolence limits self-love, so prudence - by which he means calculation of consequences - limits benevolence so that the pleasure of indulging one's desire to be generous is directed by a rigorous judgment about the larger consequences of the act."^{xciii}

Charity must maintain its overflowing qualities just as love is usually so described. But *tzedakah* must also be executed judiciously according to priorities and tests of eligibility.

In summary, Anders Nygren shows that for Paul the gift of God's love is not in any way a recognition of the intrinsic value of the human being nor of the merit of their good works. By contrast, in Maimonidean ethical and economic regeneration, the assumption is that one would prefer to succeed on their own without help for which they often feel ashamed. If one accepts help, the ideal is to succeed and no longer be shamefully dependent. This is equivalent to "justification by works" in Paul's language and it is not a worthy religious stance for such Christians, but it is Maimonides' ideal in moral and economic contexts. Law, for Paul, makes human beings face their own incapacity to be justified. They must sin and hence must be condemned. By contrast, for the Bible and for Maimonides, God invites Israel to enter into a covenant of *mitzvot* with the expectation that as human beings endowed with free will and reason, they will be capable of living up to those legal standards. Therefore human beings can earn their self-respect by living up to the law, just as human beings can earn self-respect by supporting themselves economically.

Appendix: Making a Name for Oneself and Jewish Fundraising: The Halakhic Debate in Modern Germany

One of the points of agreement of Paul and Maimonides is that giving money in order to boast is a serious religious character flaw; however where they disagree sharply is whether the donations to advance one's social prestige still have some meritorious aspect. Rabbinic Judaism certainly values a gift to the needy even when given in public, but that does not mean it does not strive to limit such self-promotion. My friend David Ellenson,^{xci^v} a historian of modern European Orthodoxy, describes a modern manifestation of the perennial Jewish debate about how to relate to giving aimed chiefly to earn social prestige. That issue became acute when compulsory donations could no longer be levied by the Jewish community:

“With the rise of the modern nation-state during the nineteenth century, the traditional political parameters of the semi-autonomous medieval Jewish community collapsed. Jews became enfranchised as private citizens of their country of residence, and the Jewish community itself increasingly came to be organized along the lines of a **voluntaristic association**.”

The modern community - unlike the medieval one - frequently and sometimes completely lost the right to tax its members for the support of social welfare and other needs. Nevertheless, social and other needs remained great:

“How to raise funds effectively and efficiently, for worthy communal causes in a manner consonant with Jewish tradition in the modern setting became a vexing issue that came to confront virtually every Jewish community in the western world during the 1800s.”

Consider this intriguing exchange between two rabbis of the era analyzed by David Ellenson.

The Question Posed by Rabbi Elasar Ottensosser of Hoechburg to Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer of Eisenstadt (1867)

Rabbi Eleasar Ottensosser (1798-1878) was greatly disturbed by the fact that the *Israelite*, a leading German-language Orthodox periodical of the 1860s in central Europe, had **published the names of donors**. He queries:⁴⁰

“In the *Israelite*, I saw the names of donors and the exact amounts of their gifts published prominently, and I was very saddened by this. I said to myself that Jews - since the moment that Israel became ‘a holy nation’ - had always sought to conceal their charitable gifts so that the recipient would not know who had contributed to their support. And **now, in the larger world, everyone boasts and haughtily proclaims what is his and looks to see if his name and his gift are displayed to the whole world.**”

This is contrary to what is found in [Rabbi Yosef Karo] who writes:

‘One who donates charity is required not to boast haughtily of the tzedakah one gives, and if one should boast, one will not only fail to receive a reward for what one has donated, but heaven will actually punish them.’^{xxx^{cv}}

⁴⁰ Meiri (13th C. Provence on TB Baba Batra 10b):

“There is yet another level in tzedakah-giving, but it cannot even be counted as a form of tzedakah: It is those **who give in order to acquire a name for themselves**, to increase their fame and stature in the eyes of others. **This is not a Jewish trait**. Moreover, it is an exceedingly disgraceful attribute. Not only is their contribution not considered tzedakah, but they are also called sinners. For it is in regards to such behavior that it is written, *the kindness of the nations is sin*.”

Ottensosser was not worried merely about the level of piety in his congregants' intentions in giving tzedakah, but the survival of Judaism in an era of unlimited imitation of the German gentile mores. Jewish tzedakah ought not to imitate social-climbing German philanthropy. Ottensosser uses an ancient Talmudic distinction in the new circumstances of modern Germany:

“Rabban Gamliel said: *Tzedakah exalts a nation* [which refers to Israel of whom it is written, *Who is like your people Israel, a singular nation on earth, and the lovingkindness of the peoples is sin* (Proverbs 14:34). All tzedakah and lovingkindness that the nations do is reckoned as sin to them, because they only do it to display haughtiness, and whoever displays haughtiness is cast into Gehinom.” (TB Baba Batra 10b)

"And if this is the case, whose heart would not be sad, seeing the corruption of so many in this way, that Israel follows the nations and publicizes its charitable gifts.”

The Response of Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer of Eisenstadt

Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer (1820-1895, destined in 1873 to become the founder of the Orthodox Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin) wrote this responsum (1867) concerning **the ethics of fundraising**:

“In my humble opinion, there is a counter-argument to be made to all of these claims. We are not able to deny that through such publicity contributions, with God's help, are increased greatly. If there is a prohibition against this, how did our ancestors act so as to pledge a fixed and explicit amount for the reading of the Torah? ... From all this, it seems to me that there is no need to veer from our customary path [in publicizing the amounts donated by contributors]. For even if such publicity does constitute a small sin, great is the sin done for the sake of a commandment (TB Horayot 10b).” (*She'iltot uteshuvot* Rabbi Azriel, Y.D. #219)

Hildesheimer had a long tradition of fundraising using prestige, enhancing hooks to rely on. In 13th C. Spain Rashba writes:

“There is a practice in a number of holy congregations, and so is it customary in our area as well, to make **an inscription on the wall of the synagogue**. This is a trait of Torah scholars and the devoutly observant - in order to reward the performance of a mitzvah. The Torah itself employs this trait, recording and publicizing those who fulfill the commandments. And if the Torah conducts itself in this manner, we must certainly follow in its ways, for *Its ways are ways of pleasantness* (Proverbs 3:17). For example, when Reuven rescued Joseph from his brothers, the Torah testifies to it (Genesis 37:12) (TB Baba Batra 133b). In the Temple they inscribed: Yossi ben Yoezer donated one [vessel], and his son donated six. We can infer from this incident that it was customary to inscribe the names of those who gave contributions for a holy purpose, so as to serve as a favorable remembrance of the mitzvah they performed, and to provide an impetus for others to do likewise.”^{xxvi}

Let us conclude with a golden mean balancing the demand for humility and the need to motivate generosity. **Yisrael ibn Al-Nakawa, Menorat HaMaor** (14th C. in Toledo, Castile) offers a middle way between these two views. He uses the tactic of Maimonides' ladder of worthiness in tzedakah to grade purity of motive. Both agree that the highest mode of giving is to give a loan that avoids shame altogether.

1. "The smallest level of them all is giving tzedakah in public or pledging it in public, let alone pledging in public and not paying.
2. The second lowest level is pledging or giving tzedakah in public both for Heaven's sake and for one's own name.
3. The third level is giving tzedakah in secret so no one but giver and recipient know.
4. The fourth level is giving tzedakah secretly to the tzedakah official who places it in the tzedakah fund and neither donor nor recipient is known.
5. Lending money to the poor in time of stress and partnering with them to strengthen them so they will not collapse and need human support." (*Menorat HaMaor* Tzedakah Gate 8)

While Maimonides' ladder was chiefly concerned with avoiding shame to the needy, Al-Nakawa is most concerned with avoiding the phenomenon of social climbing on the backs of the mitzvah. For him, it is important to cultivate pure motives. By contrast Ottensosser is worried about a loss of Jewish identity more than an inferior purity of heart when giving to Jewish causes.

ⁱ Maimonides, Gifts to the Poor 7:9

ⁱⁱ Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 279

ⁱⁱⁱ Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount reflects the same rabbinic concern for shaming people by name-calling (Matthew 5:22; Avot 3:12), but Christian charity is not seen as causing such shame, the way tzedakah is for the Rabbis.

^{iv} For example, a wealthy Carthaginian named Lucilla (4th C. CE) expected that the alms would be distributed publicly with the proclamation: "Lucilla gives you this from her own belongings." But that is not the spiritual ideal (*Gesta and Zeonphilum Consulare* 18,20 cited in R. Finn, *Almsgiving*, 37)

^v These lists of sins go back to the Testament of Reuben circa 100 BCE and they always included arrogance as one of the sins. For Gregory, pride, *vana gloria* or *superbia*, is:

"The queen of sins [which, having] fully possessed a conquered heart ... surrenders it immediately to seven principal sins ... to lay it waste".."Pride is the root of all evil, the beginning of all sin." "The seven principal vices that "spring doubtless from this poisonous root [are] vain glory, envy, anger, melancholy, avarice, gluttony, [and] lust." "[From] vain glory there arise disobedience, boasting, hypocrisy, contentions, obstinacies, discords, and the presumptions of novelties ". "[Pride is arrogance wherein a man] favours himself in his thought; and ... walks with himself along the broad spaces of his thought and silently utters his own praises." The sinfully proud man wrongs God, himself, and society." (Stanford Lyman, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, 136)

^{vi} E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 475, 481

^{vii} The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous:

1. We admitted we were **powerless** over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a **Power greater** than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have **God remove all these defects of character**.
7. Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

^{viii} While early Christian sources generally are not concerned with the shame of those dependent on Divine grace or human charity or with economic rehabilitation, one source shows how an ancient Judean applicant for a miracle healing was concerned to avoid shame and become self-sufficient. Suffering from paralysis of his hands, a mason came before Jesus with this plea:

"I was a mason and earned my living with my hands. I beg you, Jesus, restore me to health, so that I do not have to beg for food shamefully." (Gospel of Nazarene, fragment #10 cited by F. Loewenberg, *From Charity*).

^{ix} Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 18. 21, PG 35. 1009

^x R. Finn, *Almsgiving*, 205-207

^{xi} R. Finn, *Almsgiving*, 205-207

^{xii} R. Finn, *Almsgiving*, 205-207

^{xiii} In personal communication, a Catholic scholar, Daniel Cowdin, suggests "that although the honor-shame categories of classical Greece and Rome were rejected by Christianity, the Matthew 25 goats/sheep points toward a kind of mystical presence of Christ in the person in need, and that infuses, so to speak, the recipient of charity with a dignity that should be recognized by the giver. This tends toward a great dignity in the recipient, who is, at least metaphorically and maybe even metaphysically for certain types of Catholic believers, a manifestation of God. This I think would contrast with the perhaps more drastically negative (in terms of the human person) Pauline/Reform tradition." (Jan. 2011)

^{xiv} Moshe Halbertal, *Rambam/Maimonides*, 139-143

^{xv} It does not appear that Christianity makes shame central to its structuring of charity, though Paul does say:

"I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know that I worked with my own hands to support myself and those who were with me. [Paul worked for himself as a tent maker rather than accepting support as charity.] In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, '**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**'" (Acts 20:33- 35)

^{xvi} Nygren, *Agape*, 222- 224; 78

^{xvii} "**Eros** starts with the assumption of the Divine origin and worth of the soul. The soul is a pearl, which has become lost and defiled, but which retains none the less its imperishable value. Neo-Platonism can speak of the soul as a part of the World-soul, and Mysticism speaks of the 'Divine spark.' When **Plato** speaks of the soul, the thought of the **immortality of the soul** is always present. Immortality is a natural endowment of the soul, which bespeaks its Divine origin. All that is required is that the soul should purify itself and set itself free from its bondage to sense in order to return to its Divine origin. The Divine life of immortality is its normal condition.

"This idea of the natural immortality of the soul is completely foreign to the **agape** motif. Instead, we find a belief in the **resurrection of the dead**. In the course of history, these two- belief in the immortality of the soul and belief in the resurrection of the dead- have constantly been blended together; yet in fact they belong to two opposite religious and ethical worlds. Wherever the natural immortality of the soul becomes the fundamental religious dogma, we can be fairly certain that we are within the sphere of **Eros**.... Just as it is God who makes the sinner righteous, so it is God who makes the dead to live. Resurrection is the sign-manual of the Divine *Agape*. It has nothing to do with the contrast between soul and body." (Nygren, *Agape*, 222- 224)

^{xviii} Paul Ramsey, *Moralists*, 196-197, citing Emil Brunner, *Justice and the Social Order*, 121, 126

^{xix} For Emil Bruner, **natural law, justice**, is about preserving the world of the Creator, the existing order, while redemptive love is about transforming the world: "It seems correct to associate Emil Brunner's position quite closely with Luther's doctrine of the 'two realms.' Brunner speaks of 'the heavenly law of forgiving love' and of 'the earthly law of even-handed justice' and this language is reminiscent of Luther's when he speaks of the 'kingdom of God inwardly' and the 'kingdom of this world outwardly.'" (Ramsey, *Moralists*, 196):

"As the Preserver of the sinful world, God preserves it through obedience to these orders, and not through direct obedience to the commandment of love. By recognizing and adjusting ourselves to the orders we receive from God's hands the only 'means by which sinful humanity keeps the final consequences of sin at bay: that is, disorganization and chaos.' By a positive acceptance precisely on the spot of the space and time of historical institutions into which we have been called into existence by our Creator and Preserver, our 'first (although not the highest) duty' is to engage responsibly with Him in the work of maintaining the dyke which the present existing order places in the way of the irruption of chaos. It is proper to call **the spheres of secular life 'orders of preservation.'**

"There is also the more positive purpose indicated by the word "creation" in its unambiguous meaning which comprises, along with guarding against the unlimited ravishments of sin, a dual good furnished mankind by the orders. For example, in the economic order God intends to maintain human life and to "preserve" the world, and He therefore commands man to work and engage in economic activity:

"The 'second duty' that is placed upon the Christian in every order of life is to 'ignore the existing orders, and inaugurate a new line of action in view of the coming Kingdom of God.' Brunner dwells upon the ethics of social redemption and the transformation of the social order. All that Brunner asks of him is that an action which has in view the actual transformation of society be located in this world and not some other. 'God does not preserve the world simply in order to preserve it, but in order that He may perfect it.' 'He also demands from us something new.' They must not only adapt themselves; they must also resist and protest. No man has a 'right to close his eyes or shut his heart to anything by means of which love is injured by the orders.' Christian faith and love as qualities of the wills of men should also manifest a dynamic, redirecting and transforming influence upon the apparently given necessities of the orders of society and upon any of the standards of natural justice which may commend themselves to the minds of men. Love is immanent within justice and within the orders." (Paul Ramsey, *Moralists*, 204-205 citing Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative Proposition to Chapter XXI*)

^{xx} Alternative voices are heard in THE New Testament in James who says, "You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone," (James 2:24) and "so also faith without works is dead," (James 2:26).

^{xxi} The Pauline pastoral letters again reaffirm that no actions earn credit before God and there is nothing about which to boast. Paul describes himself as a Jew who forgoes his justifications by birth and by Torah in order to enjoy God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 3:5-9).

^{xxii} "The Vision of the Kingdom of God by the Puritan preacher, Jonathan Edwards, celebrated the nature of genuine benevolence as an essential expression of Christian life. According to Edwards, no one was able to truly love God or other people unless the radically transforming power of grace had intervened to liberate him from the **imprisoning circle of self-love** that was the root of all sin and rebellion against God. Once so liberated, Edwards believed, the individual was free to love God and to behave with the same spirit of benevolence with which he or she had been transformed." (Amanda Porterfield, *Charity*, 58)

^{xxiii} Ivoni Richter Reimer, "The Forgiveness of Debts in Matthew and Luke," in Kinsler and Kinsler, 161:

"The work of Christ is a work of forgiveness. Jesus instructs his disciples to pray: 'forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,' and this refers not only to spiritual forgiveness. The term used in Matthew. 6: 12 - 'forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors' - is a specific technical term used to characterize the forgiveness of debts. . . .It goes back to a heritage of Jewish Jubilee traditions. *Deror* is a technical term used to speak of the liberation of male and female slaves, and also of the cancellation of debts (see also Ex.

21 and Dt. 15)... That liberation is concrete and profoundly economic and social. It is part of the web of social relationships, and also the relationship of gender. The persons by whom the principles of *deror* and aphesis are reclaimed are indebted persons who have been turned into slaves or who are in the process of becoming slaves through the process of indebtedness, or through wars of conquest or occupation. What is intended is a broad liberation, encompassing both enslaved persons and debts.

^{xxiv} from Kent Van Til, "Christianity on Poverty and Morality"

^{xxv} Anders Nygren, *Eros*, 734

^{xxvi} cited in Kass, *Perfect Gift*, 50-51

^{xxvii} James Dunn, *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, 10

^{xxviii} E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 543, 422

^{xxix} Maimonides, *Letter on Astrology to Rabbis of Montpellier* (1194) in Ralph Lerner, *Maimonides, Empire of Light*, 179

^{xxx} Rav J. B. Soloveitchik, *On Repentance*, edited by Pinchas Peli, 187-190

^{xxxi} Nygren, *Agapes*, 222- 224; 78

^{xxxii} Nygren: "From the point of view of *Eros*, there lies behind the ethical dualism of Good and Evil a metaphysical dualism of Spirit and Matter... The soul is in itself and by nature good, but it is held in the body as in a prison, and this enforced association with the corporeal is the root of all evil. Man's ethical task, therefore, is to liberate himself from the bondage of sense. Consequently, the ethics of Eros tend to be of an ascetic character. Evil lies in the downward direction, looking towards the things of sense, while good lies in the upward direction, towards things spiritual; and man's conversion, which the Eros-ethic preaches, means a change in the direction of his desire. The desire which was previously directed downwards to the sense world is now directed upwards to the spiritual, transcendent, heavenly world." (Nygren, *Agape*, 222-224)

^{xxxiii} "Cyprian had taught the value of almsgiving '**according to God's command**' (*secundum praeceptum Dei*), and Ambrose termed Christ's call to sell one's possessions and give the money to the poor at Luke 18: 22 the '*misericordiae praeceptum*' or '**command of mercy**'; Christians were to give alms out of obedience to this divine command which they found at certain points in the scriptures, as voiced by Christ and his apostle Paul in the New Testament (Luke 11: 41, 12: 43, and 18: 22 = Matt. 19: 21 = Mark 10: 21), and by the Old Testament prophets (Isaiah 58:7)." (The editor has lost the reference for this citation).

^{xxxiv} Maimonides, Introduction to Avot, Chapter 4

^{xxxv} Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, Second Part of the Second Part. Charity: Almsgiving: Question 32*

^{xxxvi} "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out the demons" (Matthew 10:7)

^{xxxvii} Clifford Orwin, "Princess Diana and Mother Teresa" *Perfect Gift*, 90 ff

^{xxxviii} Clifford Orwin, "Princess Diana and Mother Teresa," 90

^{xxxix} Clifford Orwin, "Princess Diana and Mother Teresa," 93 ff

^{xl} Clifford Orwin, "Princess Diana and Mother Teresa," 93 ff

^{xli} Clifford Orwin, "Princess Diana and Mother Teresa," 93 ff

^{xlii} Cited in Or Rose, *My Neighbor's Faith*, 244

^{xliii} Howard Clark Kee distinguishes between an earlier strain in the NT represented by Jesus' sayings, Mark and Luke, that show deeper identification to the poor, than the later Gospels like Matthew: "This is vividly evident in Matthew's modification of the beatitude about poverty. In Luke 6:20, *Blessed are you poor*, has become in Matthew a generalization in which poverty is a metaphor: *Blessed are the poor in spirit*. That this transformation is intended is confirmed by a second change that Matthew has made in the Q tradition, by which *Blessed are you that hunger now* (Luke 6:21) has become, *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*. Matthew gives more attention to and adopts a more positive attitude toward wealth. Luke, on the other hand, continues the older tradition according to which God's primary concern is with the economically poor and the socially deprived or ostracized. Unlike Matthew, Luke adds a parallel set of woes to the rich and prosperous (Luke 6:24-26). The epitome of generosity and human concern is depicted in the uniquely Lukan parable of the Good Samaritan whose personal kindness and financial support of one in need are exemplary" (Howard Clark Kee, "Rich and Poor in the NT and in Early Christianity," in *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 36-38). In my judgment in neither strain of the Gospel would it be desirable to make the poor rich materially in this world.

^{xliiv} Frederick Bird, *Journal of Religious Ethics* 10 (Spring 1982), 158-9

^{xli v} In Jewish tradition pietists sometimes interpret the Sabbatical year as an experience of limited liberation from possessiveness.

^{xli vi} David Brakke, "Care for the Poor, Fear of Poverty, and Love of Money: Evagrius Ponticus on the Monk's Economic Vulnerability" in Holman, *Wealth*, 76- 85

^{xli vii} David Brakke, "Care for the Poor," 76- 85

^{xli viii} Among poor Christians are also some who voluntarily choose poverty as a means of expressing their solidarity with the non-voluntary poor, and their dependence upon God. Many monastic orders such as the Dominicans, Franciscans, Sisters of Mercy, etc. choose to live without personal possessions. Fervently believing that "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6: 24), monastics relinquish all personal property to dedicate themselves wholly to the service of God (from Kent Van Til, Christianity on "Poverty and Morality," 77ff)

^{xli x} Kent A. Van Til, "Poverty and Morality" in William Galston, editor, *Poverty and Morality*, 77

^l Mark Cohen, *Poverty*, 230

^{li} See Maimonides, Introduction to his Commentary on Avot, Chapter 7.

^{lii} "The Joy of Torah" in David Hartman, *Joy and Responsibility*, 17-18

^{liii} Clement, "Rich Man's Salvation," #11

- liv Clement, "Rich Man's Salvation," #14
- lv Bonnie Pattison, *Poverty in the Theology of John Calvin*, 22
- lvi Bonnie Pattison, *Poverty in the Theology of John Calvin*, 22
- lvii Paul Ramsey, "Christian Attitudes," 257-58
- lviii S. Davis, "Philanthropy as a Virtue," 18
- lix Harry Frankfurt, *Reasons of Love*, 71, cited in N. Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, 94
- lx Matthew's Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount preaches the non-resistance to evil which is the most counterintuitive to self-preservation, the most self-sacrificing love: "You have heard that it has been said, *An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*. But I say unto you, that you resist not evil: but whoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5: 38-39). However in the more rationalist Christian tradition of "natural law" theory it seems quite certain that natural self-defense against an unjust aggressor is quite alright. To the contrary, so long as Divine charity directed moral decision to what was primarily required of it, private self-defense against even an unjust aggressor was the last thing to be found among the permissions of love; and it was not until the triumph of Aristotelian naturalism and the founding of ethics more emphatically upon the basis of natural law (Aquinas) that Christian ethics grew accustomed to this assumption." (Paul Ramsey, *The Modern Moralists*, 252).
- lxi St. Basil of Caesarea, *Homilies* 6.7 (J.P. Migne, ed., PG 31.276C8-77A8) cited in Brian Daley, "The Cappadocian Fathers" in D. Groody, *The Option for the Poor*, 80.
- lxii N. Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, 94
- lxiii J.B. Schneewind, "Philosophical Ideas of Charity Some Historical Reflections," 56
- lxiv Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 56
- lxv N. Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, 112
- lxvi TB BK 9a-b, *Tosafot*
- lxvii Daniel Sperber, *Darka shel Halakha/The Path of Halakha*, 93-95
- lxviii R.P. Hanley, *Adam Smith*, 152
- lxix Hanley, *Smith*, 172
- lxx Hanley, *Smith*, 156-157
- lxxi An Anglican motto goes, "He who will not fame, shall not on marble put his name."
- lxxii Clement of Alexandria writes about "the rich man who would be saved:" "Nor was renunciation of wealth and the bestowment of it on the poor or needy a new thing, for many did so before the savior's advent ... Why then command it as new, as divine, as alone life-giving?... **It is not the outward act which others have done but something greater, more perfect, the stripping off of the passions from the soul itself.** ... and the cutting up by the roots and casting out of what is alien to the mind. For this is the lesson peculiar to the believer ... For those who formerly despised external things, relinquished and squandered their property, but the passions of the soul, I believe, they intensified. For they indulged in **arrogance, pretension and vainglory, and in contempt for the rest of mankind, as if they had done something superhuman.**" (Clement, A Sermon on "Rich Man's Salvation")
- lxxiii H. Basser, *Studies in Exegesis*, 169-170
- lxxiv see Hab. 2:5, Prov. 21:24
- lxxv H. Basser, *Studies*, 169-170
- lxxvi Mary Oates, "Faith and Good Works: Catholic Giving and Taking," 296
- lxxvii Sifte Cohen, on Sh. Ar. YD 249:3 and Tzvi Marx, *Halakha and Handicap: Jewish Law and Ethics on Disability* (1992-3, dissertation), 126
- lxxviii "Do not give pleasure to your heart in the doing of good deeds, rather all acts of piety (*hasidut*) should be done in secret "(Sefer Hassidim 8)
- lxxix Diana Lobel, *The Sufi-Jewish Dialogue*, 167-169
- lxxx Lobel, *The Sufi-Jewish Dialogue*, 170
- lxxxi Lobel, *The Sufi-Jewish Dialogue*, 171
- lxxxii Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, *The Tzedakah Treasury*, 203
- lxxxiii But Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky ("*Derekh Emunah Matnot Aniyim*," Iyun 90) argues that one will not lose the merit of giving just for bragging unless the self-glorification is designed to humiliate the recipient or embarrass other donors. (Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, *The Tzedakah Treasury*, 203)
- lxxxiv Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, *The Tzedakah Treasury* (Art Scroll), 207-208
- lxxxv The Rema (Shulkhan Arukh Yoreh Deah 249:13) agrees with this ruling despite his attack on glory-seeking donors: "However one who dedicates a specific object of a tzedakah institution may inscribe his name on it so that it should be an eternal remembrance for him and it is appropriate to do so."
- lxxxvi Jonathan Eig, "Care, Give, Promote," *Wall Street Journal* Sept, 2001
- lxxxvii Jonathan Eig, "Care, Give, Promote"
- lxxxviii Isaiah of Scetis, *Asceticon* 10.5, in *Les cinq recensions de l'Asceticon syriaque d'Abba Isai'e, L'Introduction an probleme isai'en; Version des logoi I-XI77 avec des paralleles grecs et latins*, ed. R. Draguet, CSCO 293, *Script. Syr.* 122 (Louvain: Secretariat du Corpus SCO, 1968), 141. Cf. Cyril of Scythopolis, *V. Euthymii* 50.

^{lxxxix} Daniel Caner, 236-7

^{xc} Kelly S. Johnson, *The Fear of Beggars*, 104

^{xcj} K. Johnson, *The Fear of Beggars*, 106

^{xcii} K. Johnson, *The Fear of Beggars*, 106

^{xciii} “Thomas Malthus, *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), as a Christian clergyman, could not oppose charity. He reconciled his understanding of population with necessity of Christian charity by claiming that benevolence (in a way perhaps analogous to the gentleness, beauty, and delightful irrationality associated with the feminine) has a dark side and must be controlled. Benevolence is perilous because it so easily undermines the common good. Seeing only the persons in need, it forgets the larger inescapable reality of the principle of population. **Benevolence is, in Malthus' categories: a passion, and therefore needs the direction of prudence.** As benevolence limits self-love, so prudence - by which he means calculation of consequences - limits benevolence so that the pleasure of indulging one's desire to be generous is directed by a rigorous judgment about the larger consequences of the act....

“Thomas Malthus was so anxious about beggars' power to seduce the rich into error that he compared promiscuous sex, in which a normal human passion escapes the governance of prudence and results in an increase of vice and misery, to indiscriminate almsgiving, in which another normal human passion (benevolence) escapes its prudential governance and results in an increase, not in industrious workers, but in indolence and beggary. Beggars are the bastard children of the prodigal rich whose indulgence in the pleasure of charity created them. Having been born out of a luxurious act of benevolence, the existence of these miserable dependents is the fault of those who most want to make them disappear.” (K. Johnson, *The Fear of Beggars*, 123, 125)

^{xciv} “Tzedakah and Fundraising: A Nineteenth-Century Response” (*Judaism*, 1996, 490-496)

^{xcv} *Beit Yosef* on Tur Yoreh De'ah 247,2 who cites the *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol*, Rabbi Moses Coucy, 13th C

^{xcvi} The Rema, Rabbi Moshe Isserles (16th –C. Cracow) in the Shulkhan Arukh (Y.D. 249:13) brings two contradictory views without resolving their tension:

“In any event, a person may not seek to glorify himself through tzedakah donations. If he does, not only will he not be rewarded; he will even be punished for this (*Sefer Mitzvot Gadol*). Nevertheless, one who consecrates something for a donation is allowed to inscribe his name on it, so that it may serve him as a memorial. Indeed, it is proper to do so (Responsa of Rasha #582).”