

Preferential Option for the Poor: Jewish Bible

1. If in any of the towns in the land that the Lord your God is giving you there is a fellow-Israelite in need, then do not be selfish and refuse to help him. Instead, be generous and lend him as much as he needs.
(Deuteronomy 15:7-8)

2. I, the Lord, command you to do what is just and right. Protect the person who is being cheated from the one who is cheating him. Do not ill-treat or oppress foreigners, orphans, or widows; and do not kill innocent people in this holy place.
(Jeremiah 22:3)

3. No, the Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.

(Micah 6:8)

4. Learn to do right. See that justice is done — help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows.
(Isaiah 1:17)

5. Don't take advantage of the poor just because you can; don't take advantage of those who stand helpless in court. The Lord will argue their case for them and threaten the life of anyone who threatens theirs.
(Proverbs 22:22-23)

Preferential Option for the Poor: New Testament

1. Rich people who see a brother or sister in need, yet close their hearts against them, cannot claim that they love God.
(1 John 3:17)
2. Suppose there are brothers or sisters who need clothes and don't have enough to eat. What good is there in your saying to them, "God bless you! Keep warm and eat well!" – if you don't give them the necessities of life?
(James 2:15-16)
3. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people."
(Luke 4:18-19)
4. None of you should be looking out for your own interests, but for the interests of others.
(1 Corinthians 10:24)
5. Share your belongings with your needy fellow Christians, and open your homes to strangers.
(Romans 12:13)

Source: United Bible Societies <https://www.unitedbiblesocieties.org/10-bible-verses-about-poverty-and-justice/>

Sikhism & Poverty

Nir-dhan sar-dhan dono bhaae.

Prabh ki kalla na meti jaaee. (Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Holy Scriptures, p.1159)

“The poor and the rich are both “brothers” (i.e. neighbours). This is Lord’s immutable design.”

Poverty and plenty are realities of life. The above quotation is from a Shabad (hymn) in Guru Granth Sahib (GGS), the Sikh holy Scripture. Says the Guru in this Shabad, “No one respects the poor. No matter how hard the poor man tries, the rich ignore him. When the poor man goes to the rich man, the latter turns his back on him. When the rich man goes to the poor man, the latter welcomes him warmly and offers him a seat with respect.” (GGS p. 1159) Yet, the Guru continually associates Himself with the poor (the gareeb), for it is amongst the poverty stricken, the gareeb, that humility and respect for life is found. It is through the “experience” of poverty that one learns humility. That “experience” may be real experience in life; or, as in the case of Guru Nanak, it may be “felt” as a reality of human existence.

One of the oft quoted teaching episodes in Guru Nanak’s life relates to feeding the poor and the hungry. He had been given some money by his father to do business. Instead he spent this money to feed the hungry and regarded that as a “true bargain” (*sacha sauda*).

It is true that a business cannot remain viable without making profit. However, in Sikhism, short term gains should not be at the expense of creating long term inequalities in the human society. Therefore, social systems, state policies and longer term business aims need to complement each other to ensure that the underprivileged are not forgotten. That is true business (*sacha sauda*), a concept accepted by many modern large businesses. Today’s businesses need prosperous and stable societies based on equality principles in future to thrive.

Source: All Sikh References from the Sikh Missionary Society (U.K.)

http://www.gurmat.info/sms/smsarticles/advisorypanel/gurmukhsinghsewauk/sikhi_smandpoverty.html

Islamic Teachings on Helping Those in Need

1. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any desire in their hearts of what the emigrants were given, but rather give them preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. Whoever is protected from the greediness of his own soul, then those will be successful. Surat Al-Hashr 59:9
2. The example of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever. Source: Sahih Bukhari 5665
3. Whoever grants respite to someone in difficulty or alleviates him, Allah will shade him on the Day of Resurrection when there is no shade but his. Source: Sunan At-Tirmidhi 1306
4. The people most beloved to Allah are those who are most beneficial to the people. Source: Mu'jam Al-Awsat 6192
5. There is no leader who closes the door to someone in need, one suffering in poverty, except that Allah closes the gates of the heavens for him when he is suffering in poverty. Source: Sunan At-Tirmidhi 1332
6. Allah the Exalted said: O my servants, I have forbidden oppression for myself and I have made it forbidden among you, so do not oppress one another. Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2577
7. Allah the Exalted has made clear in his law that the objective is the establishment of justice between His servants and fairness among the people, so whichever path leads to justice and fairness is part of the religion and can never oppose it. Source: al-Ṭuruq al-Ḥikmīya 1/13

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O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do

Source: All Quotes taken from the website "Faith in Allah" which is dedicated to "spreading the message of Islam and its teachings of mercy, justice, and charity." <http://abuaminaelias.com/helping-refugees-and-emigrants-in-islam/>