Greek Philanthropy (*Euergesia*)

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Introduction

Today at the public reading of the Torah in the synagogue, an official called a *gabbai* is posted at the lectern. What is his role and what is the origin of his title? In some places this official merely supervises the correct reading of the Torah, but in many synagogues in Israel today and prior to World War Two in almost all synagogues worldwide, the *gabbai,* whose name means "collector," would solicit and record (without writing on Shabbat) *voluntary* pledges from members or guests honored with ceremonial *aliyot,* invitations to the public reading of the Torah. However in ancient and medieval Jewish communities the *gabbai* was a communal official with the power to assess as an *obligatory* tax, a contribution – proportional to one's economic means – of the support for the poor. One of the most important functions of the community was then collecting contributions, in the form of a centralized tax, for the social welfare of the poor.

The Rabbinic-era city is the locus of the invention of institutionalized "tzedakah," in the form of a municipally organized welfare system within a semi-autonomous ethnic-religious group within the Greco-Roman *polis*. "Tzedakah" is a term often used in the Tanakh for justice, righteousness, or social justice but almost never for financial disbursements to the poor, whether in kind (tithes) or in monetary currency (loans). Yet the term is ubiquitous in rabbinic literature (which is recorded at least 700 years later than the Torah). The Mishna[i] is filled with references to tzedakah connected generally to a ***gabbai tzedakah*** (bursar or tax collector) and a ***kupat tzedakah*** (treasury or community fund). They attend **to a weekly communal collection and distribution system of public funds** – not to mention the organized and obligatory daily collection and distribution of food (***tamkhui***). Neither institution has direct Biblical or Greco-Roman antecedents, hence they should be regarded as Rabbinic innovations.[ii]

The tzedakah system reflects the new economic-political reality in which many Jews, in particular outside Eretz Yisrael, were city dwellers. At this same time, the Biblical tithing *(ma'aser, terumah*) and agricultural scavenging system (*leket, peah*) continued to function in Eretz Yisrael providing the poor with agricultural produce,[1] but none of that aid is provided through central communal agencies. Each

[1] While the tithing system of agricultural Israel was a legal model for the later tithing of tzedakah funds, most medieval authorities do not view that model as binding. Only with the legislation of Rabbenu Gershom (10th C, Ashkenaz) was this established: "No one can refuse to enter into a ban on those who will not contribute tithe." Called *ma'aser kesfaim*, tithing of funds, most authorities view it as rabbinic legislation, not directly derivable from the Torah, and some claim it is only

farmer distributes his tithe or designates a corner of his fields to the local poor on an *ad hoc* basis. In the Second Temple period we do hear of the Chamber of Anonymous Donations in the Temple where the poor could collect coins, but it is not clear who gathered the money or who distributed it.[iii] Only with the development of the urban system of *parnas, gabbai,* and *kuppah* (supervisor and tax collector for the tzedakah fund) do we have a centrally organized tax system for social welfare.[2] Beyond the regular needs of the poor, there were also voluntary emergency communal appeals for special needs called *pesika*.

There is a classic debate as to whether pledging funds on Shabbat was acceptable. Shammai opposed and Hillel permitted financial agreements to be concluded on Shabbat which were involved to marry off one's daughter or to secure tutors for one's sons. The latter were regarded by Hillel's school not as one's private business but as a mitzvah serving Divine purposes (TB Shabbat 12a). The debate continued for generations with later rabbis identified with the school of Shammai:

> "Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: `They do not engage in fundraising (*poskim*) for tzedakah[3] for the poor [on Shabbat] in the synagogue, even to marry off a male orphan and a female orphan; and they do not arrange marriages (*shidukhin*) between a man and his wife; and they do not pray for the sick on Shabbat. But the House of Hillel permits these." (Tosefta Shabbat 16:22)[iv]

Hillel's permissive view of collecting tzedakah pledges on Shabbat became the standard halakhic view as formulated by Maimonides:

> "Budgeting [*poskim* - fundraising and allocations] of tzedakah for the poor is conducted on Shabbat, along with other calculations necessary for mitzvoth." (Maimonides, Shabbat 24:5)

This is still current practice in many congregations in Israel today in which one vows a pledge to the synagogue when receiving an aliyah to the Torah reading. [v] In fact, these honors are often auctioned off to the highest bidder. The principle of discussing business on Shabbat is that one may not speak of one's own private accounts, as Isaiah says: "*Refrain from …doing your pursuits on my holy day… or speaking of them*" (Isaiah 58:13-14). However the Rabbis make a distinction: "*Your pursuits* are prohibited, but Heavenly pursuits are permitted" (TB Shabbat 113). Thus the Arukh HaShulkhan (20th C.) summarizes the halakha:

> "It is permitted to discuss Heavenly pursuits [on Shabbat] such as calculating expenses for performing a mitzvah such as calculating a tzedakah account or the costs of a mitzvah banquet or raising (*poskim*) funds for tzedakah. Similarly, **it is permitted to supervise and tend to public business for nothing is a greater Heavenly pursuit than that!**
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> "Making public announcements is prohibited but the exception is making announcements about a lost object [which it is mitzvah to return]… and proclamations concerned in any way with city regulations (*takanat* of the city) or with the wellbeing of the public. Such was the practice [on Shabbat] at international trade fairs

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a custom, not a law. However a community may bind its members - with their consent - to pay a tithe or any other assessment for the poor and then coerce its payment.

[2] While the rabbinic system of taxation and distribution of aid was developed by city officials on quasi-judicial model of three *gabbaim* that often included important rabbis, the ancient church developed centralized giving in what became a quasi-liturgical context. Initially "deacons," which mean literally "servers," were appointed to feed the widows in the church (Acts 6:1-6, 4:34-35). Later the bishop became the "father of the poor" collecting free will contribution often during the mass as part of the service and distributing charity from his home or from the church.

[3] ***Poskim tzedakah*** may mean: determining distribution of foods and funds appropriate to the poor, or setting the amounts owed for tzedakah by community members.

to announce the names of those who do not pay their bills faithfully, for even though this concerns an individual, it affects the public conduct of commerce and the needs of the many, so one may announce it on Shabbat." (Arukh HaShulkhan OH Shabbat 306:13-14)

Jews also participated, both in and outside of the land of Israel, in the Greek and Hellenistic invention of the *polis* with its high degree of citizen participation in public life and self-financing. Jews adopted and adapted Hellenistic forms of government as well as terminology – such as *sanhedrin, synagogue, prosbul*.

The Rabbinic municipal welfare system, however, is radically different than the Greek polis, both the classical Greek city states and the Hellenistic cities that continued to flourish throughout the Greco-Roman era, and coincided with the Mishnaic era. The philanthropy that epitomizes Greek culture has a wholly different narrative, motivation, destination and organization than Rabbinic tzedakah. The Rabbinic city's basic institution of municipal tax collection benefits the poor. This is as an obligatory tax and a structured, egalitarian distribution of maintenance – basically, a social welfare city. Here, then, for the first time we meet the full-fledged use of the institution and concept of "tzedakah." One hot issue of such systematic municipal or state welfare is whether to permit private giving to beggars who want to collect money, beyond their regulated city allotment, on an ad hoc basis. Private giving to the needy is also called tzedakah, but that is a different conception of meeting one's duties to the poor.

"Considering human affairs, one must not ... consider man as he is and not consider what is mortal in mortal things, but think about them [only] to the extent that they have the possibility of immortalizing." - Aristotle, (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1177b31)

"The *polis* was for the Greeks,[vi] as the *res publica* was for the Romans, first of all their **guarantee against the futility of individual life**, the space protected against this futility and reserved for the relative permanence, if not immortality, of mortals...But Hobbes called that need for public admiration [mere] 'vainglory.'" - Hannah Arendt (*The Human Condition,* 56)

Philanthropy is Big Money from Big Men

In American parlance today a **philanthropist** is not one who gives $1 to a beggar. The gift of a philanthropist must be much larger, in the tens of thousands of dollars, and the recipient is most often a public institution which also serves to publicize the donors' names making them public figures even though their money was made in the private sector. The ancient connection between economics and politics, between private wealth and public good in the Greek "polis," the city, is still essential for the conception of 20th C. philanthropy. Then and now, money, when bestowed on the community, raises the status of the givers and bestows on them honorable recognition. Their grand gifts demonstrate their belonging to an aristocratic caste of big givers and high society – people who hobnob together and mingle with prestigious political and media celebrities at "benefit" events – from which they benefit socially. If the family is old money, or aristocracy, as in Europe, such as the Rothschilds, or like the Rockefellers in America, then their gifts are not just an expression of a personal whim but a sign of *noblesse oblige.* If they are new money, hi-tech, self-made millionaires, like Bill Gates, then giving in style is a sign that they have "arrived" socially. In America the institutional beneficiary, like Columbia University, and its head, like General Dwight Eisenhower in the 1950s, must be prestigious, so the donor is associated indirectly with the beneficiary's high-station which derives from a a non-economic ladder of achievement. Such heads

include great conductors like Leonard Bernstein at the Lincoln Center, or a great professor who heads a university, or a distinguished retired political leader who heads a museum. The institution must have prestige and staying power in the realm of knowledge, arts or public visibility, like Harvard University or Sinai Hospital in New York City, or the Kennedy Center concert hall. Often the institution constructs a showcase building, whose architect might be world-famous, like I. M. Pei or Moshe Safdie, in order to grant the donor's name physical mass and make it a landmark to immortalize the donor's own transitory life. But the philanthropist does not as such "buy" a building, rather it is "a gift" gratefully received by a trans-generational institution whose success will guarantee relative immortality and fame for the donor – as long as the institution which s/he has supported lasts. Greek-style philanthropy is characterized by public recognition, not disinterested anonymous altruism. In a sense the donors give to themselves, to their community, to their collective self with which they identify as the patrons of the city and its reputable organizations.[4] Philanthropy enhances one's own city's greatness which redounds to the pride of its leading citizens.

In many ways this easily-recognized, contemporary concept of **elite philanthropy,** as we shall see, is continuous with its original Greek and Hellenistic cultural context (500 BCE to 400 CE), though today's American term "philanthropy"[5] is not always carefully distinguished from other charitable contributions also recognized by the IRS.. One might be tempted to collapse the terms charity and philanthropy since the etymological root in both cases is "love." But these are very different definitions of "love."

Philanthropy means, literally, love of humankind (*phil* + *anthropos*).[vii] *Philanthropia* originates as an epithet of certain Greek gods.[viii] For instance, Prometheus was given this epithet for his gift of fire to humanity.[ix] "Charity" also means love, or *caritas* in Latin. The distinction between the terms is further blurred since ancient Christians who spoke Greek often spoke of their charity to the poor as Christian philanthropy. Therefore a speaker of English might expect all these terms to overlap easily, such that a Greek philanthropist would be expected to feel love or at least sympathy for the poor,[6] to provide for the

[4] In ancient Greece and Rome one often sponsored games and in modern America and Europe the wealthy often sponsor their local professional sports teams. While that is not a charitable write-off on their taxes, it does fit perfectly the ideals of building the name of one's city, creating civic pride and redounding to one's own name. Attendance at an important championship game then becomes a place for the wealthy citizens and celebrities to show themselves in public.

[5] Note that the Greek term philanthropy has long history involving Christianization in the late classical Roman Empire, a modern revival among the French in the 18th century Age of Sensibility. Then in the late 19th century its redefinition as practice of scientific giving was opposed in the extreme to charity. Today philanthropy is again being redefined in terms of entrepreneurial roles. So Greek characterizations are by no means the "last word on philanthropy." However some of the powerful overtones of the classical era continue to color this term even as used today, hence the value in this historical reprise.

[6] If Greeks did not have a universal sense of humanity and brothers, then they did have a well-developed sense of brotherhood in a different sense. **Greek *phrateres* = brotherhood without universal fraternity.** Greek philanthropy then has none of the connotations of universal brotherhood trumpeted in the slogans of the French Revolution – *liberte, fraternite and egalite*. For the Greeks, liberty is only for upper class who are capable of self-government; equality is contrary to nature which has hierarchal levels of authority and excellence; and fraternity has very limited scope. The Greek institution of **fraternity** does not imply a universal brotherhood of all human beings descended from the common biological ancestry of Adam and Eve as in the Biblical narrative. The etymology of "brother" or "*Bruder*" or "*frere*" does go back to the Greek *phrateres,* but it is not the Greek word for biological brothers. Rather all Athenian citizens were organized in voluntary local associations of *phrateres* who celebrated holidays together, drank together, marked an adolescent rite of passage together (by sacrificing one's cut hair) and celebrated weddings together with a festive dinner. These non-natural "brothers" relied on one another for support and inscribed one another as members on a list of the *phrateria*. Later descendants of this kind of association may be the Rabbinic Havurah and the contemporary college's Greek fraternities, both of which are non-biological brotherhoods consecrated around rituals of eating, socializing and partying together.

material needs, and to encompass all humans under the umbrella of emotional and material support. However the ideal cultural type of Greek philanthropy is for the most part nothing like that. One must beware when reading standard translations of classical Jewish and Muslim texts into English, which translate terms like "tzedakah", *zakat* and *sedaqa* as "charity". These translations often betray radical divergences in the cultural-religious understanding of those concepts. Let us systematically disentangle these terms as best we can and, more important, distinguish their narratives and nuances of giving, so we can map the rich and varied rhetoric of generosity.

The original Greek **"*philanthropia*"** broadly reflects general kindness toward human beings by gods or more often friendships among upper class peers. Functionally it does not mean giving money or any other form of aid to the poor – with the exception of the traveler.

> "Aristotle notes that friendship seems to be a natural instinct, 'for which reason we praise those who love their fellow men (*philanthropous*)' (Aristotle, 1155a). Here **'philanthropic' means 'benevolent' or 'humane,' without the sense of public giving or aid to the needy** carried by its modern cognate. It is the attitude with which we should approach our dealings with other people, the foundation of that friendship which, if properly reciprocated, would make recourse to law rare and unnecessary. We praise philanthropy not because it promotes a certain kind of act, but because it is the way we feel toward others if we are properly brought up."[x]

Neither Plato nor Aristotle wrote treatises about *philanthropia*, rather they are concerned with justice. In one exceptional note, Plato says insofar as humans imitate the virtues of the gods, such as *philanthropia*, they become gods.[xi] But that virtue is not manifest in helping someone from a lower social class.

The Greek term ***euergesia*** refers to contributions, but not for the poor or stranger, and not for material needs of survival. The term "*anthropos*" in philanthropy generally does not refer to all human beings. Greeks – except for some later Stoic cosmopolitans – drew a line between barbarians (who could not speak Greek) and Hellenes, especially since the 5th C. BCE, after the first defeat of the Persian invaders and the alliance of most Greek city states under Athens' hegemony. While Greeks do have a minimal notion of universal humanity, *anthropos*, as opposed to animal life, that has no social implications. Humanity is found in the excellence and solidarity of their fellow male aristocratic citizens of the polis. Only those are truly human who have Greek culture and who transcend the merely animal needs of work, reproduction, and biological survival. They have *logos* which means language, reason and logic. Humanity, as reflected by much of the Greek literary corpus in our hands, does not include barbarians, slaves, and women,[7] all of whom are not fully human since they are tied to physical necessity. Therefore they are not appropriate recipients of socially approved giving or even of friendship, *philia*. Only citizens, who are in effect aristocrats, gentlemen, and who need not work with their hands for a living, can actualize their humanity through their leisure.[8] Their wealth allows them to engage in social activities typical of a truly "human"

[7] ***Philia,*** love of friendship, is raised to the highest level by Aristotle whose longest section in Nicomaethean Ethics is devoted to friendship. Nietzsche characterizes marriage as "an extended conversation" on the model of Aristotelian *philia*, love as friendship. But Greeks could never imagine a philosophical friendship with a woman who is by nature too emotional (hysterical) and too tied to biological life and so wholly irrational.

[8] Paul Veyne writes: "The essence of the notable was that he was a man of leisure, independent and fully human…Aristotle says that slaves, peasants, craftsmen and shopkeepers cannot be happy ('Of all occupations by which gain is secured," says Cicero, "none is better than agriculture.') Only those persons who have the means to organize their lives as they wish, that is, a life of enjoyment, a political life or the life of the philosopher. Only men of leisure are truly citizens. Aristotle says: **'Our definition of the excellence of a citizen will not apply to every citizen nor to every free man as such but only to those who are freed from necessary services**. The necessary people are either slaves or mechanics or laborers. No man can practice excellence (*arête*) who is living the life of a mechanic or laborer." (Veyne, *Bread*, 47). "A poor man cannot be magnificent, since he has not the means with which to spend large sums fittingly….for all these bring greatness and prestige." (Aristotle, *Nicomeathean Ethics*)

existence, like philosophy, politics (from the term *polis*), war, Olympic sports and arts. Implicit in the notion of being "truly human" is the degradation of those who are by nature fit only to fulfill biological needs, like one's servants.

After the classical era of Athens, *philanthropia* became synonymous with the original term for gifts to the polis, *euergesia*:

> "Another use of *philanthropia* is found in inscriptions and papyri from the 3rd C. BCE on. It means something like 'privileges,' including privileges or concessions granted in return for monetary benefits offered to a city or state, or the benefactions of people of means to these various institutions, or to persons of lower status.
> Giving gifts was a two-way street, implying that donors would get something in return for their gifts, be it only the achievement of intangible "honor" or status in the eyes of the public, or something more tangible, such as a plaque or an inscribed stele recording the gift, or a dinner in the donor's honor. The gift itself would be called a *philanthropon*, and the honor or recognition bestowed in return likewise a *philanthropon*. The motive was *philotimia* (love of honor)."[xii]

Furthermore, Greek philanthropy, unlike tzedakah or charity, is not given to the needy but to those like the donor whose class is *not* engaged in satisfying demeaning needs. *Philanthropia* or *euergesia* do not minister to the physical needs of private individuals, with some limited exceptions like benefits for the orphaned or disabled victims of war, but to the cultural and political needs of the polis. The elite Greek and Hellenistic life is not about supplying basic needs but about transcending animal or physiological necessity altogether.[xiii]

Therefore the form of aid offered in Greek *euergesia cannot,* like charity and tzedakah, involve satisfying the physical needs of the needy whose biological functions are not strictly speaking "human" needs. To provide a lower class person with a job cannot be truly praiseworthy, as labor is itself demeaning, not ennobling. The need to work demonstrates one's shameful dependence and one's merely animal focus on survival needs, not one's prized autonomy or autarchy (self-sufficiency). Zeus, according to Hesiod's myth, created human beings as slaves to provide food for the gods. Aristotle's God is conceived as the self-thinking thought. Neither kind of Greek god is depicted, as the Biblical God is, as a craftsman creator. The highest "activity" for Greek philosophic elites is thought, the *vita contemplativa* – the leisure of the scholar – not remunerative, self-supporting menial work.[9] But they also value at a slightly lower level, the *vita activa* of politics, art and heroic war which are also seen as higher pursuits worthy of humanity. Farming might be useful to a city, but: "It is for man (*andres*) to excel in war, since farming is slave's work" (Menander, comic dramatist, 3rd C. BCE).

Among the Greeks there is no love lost on the poor even though love is half of "*phil*"-anthropia. *Euergesia* is the activity that earns the Greek aristocrat the epithet, "lover of the polis," a phrase that appears in the Greek historian Thucydides' version of Pericles' famous funeral oration to Athens. **There is no love, sympathy, empathy or admiration for the poor nor the condition of poverty.** [xiv] Poverty itself is portrayed as demeaning and corrupting in Greek culture.

> "Poverty does not belong to the catalog of virtues proposed as goals worthy of the young Greek. ... The Greeks considered any mention of poverty to be demeaning and implying lack of culture, greed, foul speech, or evil

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[9] Note the extreme contrast with the Biblical view of the craftsperson's physical labor, *melacha*, the human term for the work of an artisan, which is the same term for God's creative activity in the Creation (Genesis 2:1-3) and the celebration of Shabbat. Compare also the Rabbis' idea of being *shutaf bamasse breshit* – being a co-creator, a co-worker with God, through our weekly occupations.

manners in general. ... Greek or Roman authors spoke with disgust of the sight of beggars and petitioners crowding synagogue courtyards in various cities of the Mediterranean. Artemidorus of Ephesus, for instance, a soothsayer from the second half of the second century C.E., writes about "a synagogue and beggars and all kinds of people who ask for gifts and arouse pity, and about mendicants, who foretell grief, anxiety and heartache to both men and women." [xv]

Generally the term for poor, *ptochi*, refers not to the destitute but to the working poor or simply the working classes. The destitute[xvi] are not a subject of interest in Greek sources.[xvii] Greek generosity was directed at one's family and friends from the same social class. [xviii] In short:

> "The poor did not comprise a discrete social or political category, and poverty was not as such a criterion for assistance. Those at the receiving end of social benefits were eligible solely by nature of their membership in the community, either because they were citizens of the city or because of some socially recognized dependence (as kin, clients or friends) to a particular patron."[xix]

By contrast, the Bible has great sympathy for the poor who are protected by God from injustice. In Psalms, the poor become a symbol of the devout, humble and pious. The people of Israel are often described as poor and oppressed. In the Rabbinic world, great scholars, like Hillel, Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Akiba, are portrayed as working poor, which does not detract from their authority or suggest any character faults. None of the heroes among the Greek tales are portrayed in a similar manner.

Aristotle sums up revealingly the Greek ideal of giving among the elite citizens of the city state.[10] One gives gifts to friends (liberality) and one gives public works to the collective (magnificence). Both kinds of giving are expressions of one's noble character, rather than of loving responses to need or of legal obligations:

> "The Aristotelian virtues directly associated with giving have little to do with love of humanity. The noble 'will give to the right people, and the right amount, and at the right time, and fulfill all the other conditions of right giving' (Aristotle 1120a). Right giving, like all of Aristotle's virtues, stems directly from the character of the individual and from his desire to achieve happiness through living the most choice-worthy life and doing the most praiseworthy deeds. **The right people are his family, friends, and fellow citizens,** who share his penchant for virtue and will, in their turn, give rightly." [xx]

Greek giving is concerned much less with the recipient's needs or merits than with the giver's public demonstration of his admirable character:

> "The motive for giving has little to do with the material circumstances of the recipient, and when it does, the relevant issue is whether or not he is **in position to return the benefit**.[xxi] To give to an unworthy person, or in a way that does not sustain friendships that make up our social relations, is simply wasteful. From Aristotle to Seneca public giving, whether by individuals or the state, is intended to secure those goods most desirable to the givers, not necessarily the recipients." [xxii]
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> "**Liberality**, the virtue associated with small sums, is the disposition to '**give for the nobility of giving.**' When large sums and public display come into play we graduate from liberality to **magnificence**, but the basic account of virtue does not change. Thus writes Aristotle, '**the**

[10] Rabbinic municipalities also depended on the economic elite – the *parnas* or seven *tovei ha-ir* (good ones of the city) - who helped support the poor and the municipal services. In distributing the honors, such as being called to the Torah, a social hierarchy must be observed in which supporters of the needy have a particularly high status:
"After [the *kohen* and *levi*], we call **Torah scholars who are appointed as leaders [*parnasim*] of the public *[tzibur]*,** and after them the sons of Torah scholars, whose fathers are appointed leaders of the public, and after them community heads [*roshei knesiot*] and everyone else" (TB Gittin 60a and see TB Baba Batra 8a).

> **magnificent man is an artist in expenditure:** he can discern what is suitable, and spend great sums with good taste.' If the situation calls for it 'he will spend gladly and lavishly, since nice calculation is shabby; and he will think how he can carry out his project most nobly and splendidly, rather than how much it will cost and how it can be done most cheaply" (Aristotle 1121a-b). In all, however, he observes the mean with regard to his resources and his position in the community, otherwise he becomes prodigal, profligate, and a fool. " [xxiii]

The Greek practice of what we call today "philanthropy" does not concern itself with the needs of *bios* (biological life, physical survival) nor with *oikos* (private household economy), but only with the *polis*, including political, sporting and civic life, which are the *vita activa* (agonistic competitive activities of cultural achievement) or the *vita contemplativa* (philosophy). For contributions of funds to the polis, Greeks would not have used the term *philanthropia* but the term ***euergesia***: ***Euergesia* = doing good works (*eu* + *erga*) (for one's city).** It refers to the practice of individuals giving, from their own private fortune, gifts to their polis for public works. ***Euergesia* is the ideal activity of the Greek citizen as a lover of the city.**[11] "To be *philopatris*, a lover of one's home city was an admirable quality which when demonstrated by public benefaction was duly recognized with honors."[xxiv] The historian of the Greco-Roman-Christian era, Peter Brown explains:

> ***"Euergesia***, the urge to 'do good' for the civic public by benefactions; the wish to be a *euergetes*, a 'doer of good,' to be **a public benefactor;** and the desire to be a *philotimos*, to stand out among one's fellows for the extent of one's public generosity: these Greek words became associated with actions that were especially prized by the elites of the classical world and by their inferiors in every city...It is the **personal agency of the great, in their decision to sacrifice private wealth for the public good**.
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> "It is hard to envisage the appearance of a Greco-Roman city without the architectural and artistic contributions of private, civic-minded donors who adorned the city with great love and commitment as well as with the **expectation of being honored and praised by their fellow-citizens**."[xxv]
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> "It was always **the city** that was, in the first instance, the recipient of gift or the civic community, the *demos* or the *populus* of the City. It was never the poor. ...The rich thought of themselves as the fellow citizens of a distinctive community - their city. It was *their* city they were expected to love. A rich man was praised for being ***philopatris***, a 'lover of his home-city,' never for being a 'lover of the poor.'
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> "The *euergetes* showed his 'love of his city' by lavishing gifts[xxvi] upon it, so as to increase the glory of its urban fabric... 'Love of the poor,' therefore, did not grow naturally out of the ideals of public beneficence that had dominated the public benefactors in Greek and Roman times."[xxvii]

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[11] Epidaurus, 1st CE: "In marketing, corn on numerous occasions, whenever there was a need, he harmed his private livelihood for the sake of the good of all, and he provided certain **buildings for the city** ...**spending on this thing lavishly and beyond what was normal** ...and so too in his public offices, he met expenses with **magnificent generosity** ...and in doing all this he harmed still further his private livelihood." (IG VI(2) 65)

Phrygia, 237 CE: [Decree:] "Whereas Aurelius Marcus, son of Theobulus, is a man by family tradition munificent [*philotimos*] to the people and a benefactor to each and all, who on no occasion fails with public spirit nobly and amply to relieve the needs pressing upon the **native city**... and now, with **unstinting generosity more than requiting the people for their praises of him,** he has further given for public distributions and festivities a corn purchase fund, so that through the munificence [*philotimia* = literally, love off fame] of this great gift the festival of Happiness-day will year by year make a braver show. Therefore the people, mindful of these acts of kindness, have by general and popular vote decreed the erection in his honor, on the most conspicuous spot, of a statue with suitable inscription, **so that his children and his descendants may jointly and severally this honor in perpetuity by contemplating the gratitude of his native town**." (JHS 1937, 6)

What, rather than **who**, is then the ideal recipient of Greek-Hellenistic gift-giving? First in allocations is public culture such as civic festivals with the social aristocracy of sponsors parading in procession according to rank. Roman gladiatorial games later replace Greek theater festivals in honor of Dionysus as popular recipients of largesse.[xxviii] Second, religious culture is supported by donors in the form of temples of the city's gods bearing the name of the donor, or elaborate funeral feasts[xxix] of the benefactor accompanied with free perfume, sweets and food. Third is high culture: libraries or an "Odeon" for musical performances. Finally, there are public works paid for by private contributors such as building the works (*liturgia*) of civic civilization: agoras, aqueducts etc. Nonetheless, the disabled and orphaned victims of war receive support not out of mercy but in honor of their own contribution and their fathers' contribution to the glory of the polis.[xxx]

In most cases Greek *euergesia* is not designed to solve problems but to express symbolic relationships of honor. It speaks to peers and to the city, but not to the poor. It addresses higher needs of culture and honor, not basic needs. It is a fulfillment of the human *telos,* or the human essence, according to the aristocracy, not the preservation of human life and existence as such.[xxxi]

Greek giving, then, takes place on the public plane among social beings. It should *not* be anonymous and should *not* be wasted on those outside of the community of memory within the polis. When wheat doles were distributed, as in democratic Athens, it was only to male citizens of one’s own city and showed preference for war orphans whose fathers died serving the polis or for disabled war veterans. **Greek *euergesia* is not self-sacrificing, but builds the social self and one's deserved pride as a big player in the public space.**

The true self is social, as Aristotle writes: "The human is by nature an animal intended to live in a polis." So the greatest loss is loss of one's honor and the greatest gain is permanence of honor, i.e. fame and immortality. But human sociality does not mean that reciprocity and interdependence in meeting basic needs are ideals as they are in Biblical notions of brotherhood and guarantorship of each other’s existence. Aristotle’s ideal is one who needs no one else for material needs but only to share intellectual love, *philia.* The generosity of an aristocrat is not a matter of exchange of benefits, tit-for-tat reciprocity, but a show of largesse. “The *megalopsychos*, the magnificent or great-spirited one, is chiefly concerned with honors and dishonors.” He is generous but wary to accept gifts “for one who receives a service is inferior to him who has done it, but the proud man wishes to be superior.”[xxxii]

Therefore the preferred recipient for giving is one’s own city’s cultural-religious needs.[xxxiii] Such gifts will immortalize one's own fame and preserve the name of one's family along with the greatness of the polis. When the polis is the beneficiary, then one's name is revered as long as those buildings and that city and its culture continue. Permanence is what gives significance in Greek thought, hence its adoration of the heavenly bodies. The polis as an intergenerational institution with a mechanism for memorializing itself is the closest human parallel to the unchanged eternalities of mathematics and astronomy. "To live forever in the mouths of the people" is one much desired epitaph found on Greek tombstones.

Such giving to the city reflects solidarity with one’s fellow citizen but does not necessarily promote equality or brotherhood as in the Bible. For this is a gift-giving that establishes hierarchal relationships according to the anthropologist Marcel Mauss’ typology of gift-giving. Some ancient gift-giving reinforces existing relationships and some are competitive to establish new dominance:

> “The rich man can only prove his good fortune by spending it and sharing it out, humiliating others by placing them ‘in the shadow of his name’” “To refrain from giving, just as to refrain from

> accepting, is to lose rank....One loses face forever if one does not reciprocate. **To give is to show one's superiority, to be more, to be higher in rank,** *magister*. To accept without giving in return, or without giving more back, is to become a client and servant, to become small, to fall lower (*minister*)."[xxxiv]

Gift-giving, then, is *not* to be regarded as a mere leisure-time activity pursued at the margins of life with one's disposable income, while the "real" work that defines one's station in life is about economic productivity, official positions of governance and war, as they are in Western Protestant societies. Rather for the Greeks and Hellenists "voluntary" gift-giving and the gift-receiving involve the production and reproduction of the very structure of society as the anthropologist Levi Strauss argues:

> "Society is founded on exchange and exists only through the combination of all sorts of exchange - women (kinship), goods (economy), representations and words (culture). For Levi-Strauss, the symbol was in some cases more real than the 'reality' it signified."[xxxv]

Martha Nussbaum, in her study of the Roman Senator Cicero who gave his life for the Roman Republic, identifies a deeper connection between Greek *philanthropia* and Roman *humanitas*.

> "**Thick fellowship** [is] Cicero's most interesting claim for the republic. It is that our participation in it makes claims on our human faculties that other more distant associations do not. **We share in speech and reason in a variety of ways when we associate with our fellow citizens, thus confirming and developing our humanity in relation to them.** For this reason, Cicero thinks, we owe the republic more material aid than we do to foreign nations and nationals. The idea is presumably that we have reasons to make sure that the institutions that support and confirm our humanity prosper."[xxxvi]

Being human, rather than bestial, is matter of sociability expressed in language and shared cultural practices. So one can actualize one's potential to be fully human because of civic institutions to which the elites contribute. Participating in these multi-generational institutions give the donors as well as the creative participants not only immortality but humanity in the process of achieving human and hence divine excellence.

Greek Generosity or Rabbinic Duty? A Class Privilege or a Universal Obligation?

By comparing patterns of gift-giving in Greco-Roman and Jewish societies, we will discover their diverging models but also where they share converging symbolic self-understandings. At this point we can draw a basic comparison between Greek or Hellenistic *euergesia* and Rabbinic municipal tzedakah in terms of the recipient, the kinds of needs met, the mode of collection and the class of the giver. Both are urban norms and institutions, but they function quite differently:

- Municipal tzedakah is for the poor - whether those who reside in your city or the foreign poor, not a Greek gift to my collective, to the polis and not an expression of one's class, one's nobility or even one's ethical character.
- Tzedakah serves the physical needs of the poor and their honor, not the cultural needs of the polis and its elite.
- Municipal tzedakah is collected as a tax, not a voluntary gift of *noblesse oblige*.
- The donors of tzedakah are not only the rich but even the poor who also participate in the community.
- Since Greek *euergesia* is voluntary, it seeks and expects social recognition, while tzedakah does not. The Rabbinic giver is not identified as exemplary by the act of giving and the

recipient does not owe special thanks to the individual donor for municipal taxes that go into the tzedakah *kuppah* (treasury). Hence secret giving is so important in Jewish society and yet, unthinkable and self-defeating for the Greeks.

The Greek Classical Ideal of Hospitality[12] Embattled

In the Jewish tradition the mitzvah of hospitality such as the Haggadah's invitation: "Let all who are hungry come and eat the Passover lamb," and the mitzvah of tzedakah of supporting the needy go hand in hand. However in Greek tradition there is a remarkable divergence here. There is no moral or legal obligation to sustain the poor in one's own society and yet there is a religious duty to extend hospitality. That exclusion of the poor from the purview of the Greek urban life (the aristocratic intellectual elite) in Athens and in Hellenism contrasts with the ethos of the classical Greek world summed up in the 8th C. by the oral poetry of Homer. Homer held high the value of hospitality which Zeus championed, and he extended it to all classes including swine-herders and even wandering beggars in ways similar to the hospitality ethos of Biblical, Christian and many pre-urban societies. This classical Greek value of hospitality had to struggle against self-serving upper class social-climbers who – even though they would not engage in menial labor – demeaned beggars for not working manually for their living. They preferred to expel with physical blows these "disgusting" beggars who "invaded" their palaces and banquets.

In the literary context of the *Odyssey,* the following excerpt describes the war hero's long-delayed return home from Troy after ten years of wandering in which he often depended on hospitality. King Odysseus comes to test the virtue and loyalty of his wife, his son and his subjects, and to expel the vulture-like aristocrats who have sought to tempt or coerce his wife into marriage in order to claim Odysseus' crown and holdings. Disguised as a beggar and accompanied by his loyal swine-herder who is in the know, Odysseus meets these rivals – one on the road and the others in his own house. **The test of virtue is the treatment of the beggar who can reciprocate no benefit nor threaten any vengeance.**

> "The pair set out, and Eumaeus [Odysseus' trustworthy old swineherd] brought his King [Odysseus] to the city, hobbling along with his staff and looking like a wretched old beggar-man in the miserable clothes he was wearing.

[12] "The word hospitality derives from the Latin *hospes*, which is formed from *hostis*, which originally meant a 'stranger' and came to take on the meaning of the enemy or 'hostile stranger'. The meaning of "host" can be literally read as "lord of strangers." Furthermore, the word *hostire* means equalize/compensate.
In the Homeric ages, hospitality was under the protection of Zeus, the chief deity of the Greek pantheon. Zeus was also attributed with the title 'Xenios Zeus' ('xenos' means stranger), emphasizing the fact that hospitality was of the utmost importance. A stranger passing outside a Greek house could be invited inside the house by the family. The host washed the stranger's feet, offered him/her food and wine, and only after he/she was comfortable could he/she be asked to tell his/her name. The Greek concept of sacred hospitality is illustrated in the story of Telemachus and Nestor. When Telemachus arrived to visit Nestor, Nestor was unaware that his guest was the son of his old comrade Odysseus. Nonetheless, Nestor welcomes Telemachus and his party lavishly, thus demonstrating the relationship between *hostis*, "stranger," and *hostire*, "equalize," and how the two combine in the concept of hospitality. Later, one of Nestor's sons slept on a bed close by Telemachus to take care that he should not suffer any harm. Nestor also put a chariot and horses at Telemachus' disposal so that he could travel the land route from Pylos to Sparta rapidly, and set his son Pisistratus as the charioteer. These illustrate the two other elements of ancient Greek hospitality, **protection** and **guidance**. Based on the story above and its current meaning, hospitality is about compensating/equalizing a stranger to the host, making him feel protected and taken care of, and at the end of his hosting, guiding him to his next destination." (Wikipedia)

Beside the rocky path ... and not far from the city, ... they fell in with one Melantheus [himself a goat-herder higher on the social ladder than swine-herder and the boss of two shepherds of his own] ...This man no sooner set eyes on them than he burst into a torrent of **vulgar abuse**, which roused Odysseus to fury.

‘Ha !' the fellow cried. 'One scapegrace with another in two - a case of birds of a feather! **Tell me, you miserable swineherd, where are you taking this wastrel of yours, this nauseating beggar and killjoy at the feast?** Just the sort to lean against all the door-posts and polish them with his shoulders, begging for scraps, but never for work on the pots and pans. Give him to me, to look after the folds, to sweep the pens and carry fodder to the kids, and he might thrive on whey and work his muscles up. But the fellow has taken to bad ways, and work on the farm is the last thing he's looking for. He'd much rather fill his gluttonous belly by touting round the town for alms. You mark my words, and see what happens if he goes to King Odysseus' palace. He'll have a warm reception from the people there -a shower of footstools shied at his head and breaking on his ribs.' With that he passed by and, as he did so, the fool landed a kick on Odysseus' hip, failing, however, to thrust him off the path, so firm was his stance. ...

Meanwhile Odysseus and his trusty swineherd had arrived.... Odysseus, taking the swineherd by the arm: ‘This must surely be Odysseus' palace!’ ... Odysseus looked exactly like some ancient and distressful beggar as he limped along with the aid of his staff, and his rags that hung upon him were a filthy sight. He sat down on the wooden threshold... inside the door, with his back against a pillar[xxxvii] of cypress … Telemachus [Odysseus’ youthful son] beckoned the swine-herder to his side, and selecting a whole loaf from the dainty basket of bread and as much meat as his cupped hands would hold, he said:
'Take this food and give it to the newcomer. And tell him to go the rounds himself and beg **from each of the company in turn... For modesty sits ill upon a needy man.'**

Odysseus promptly answered with a prayer: ‘**I pray to you, Lord[xxxviii] Zeus,[xxxix] to make Telemachus[xl] a happy man and grant him all the wishes of his heart**.' He then stretched out both hands to take the food, put it straight down in front of his feet on his shabby wallet and continued to eat as long as the minstrel's song was heard in the hall. ... [The goddess] Athene appeared before Odysseus and urged him to go round collecting scraps from the Suitors and learning **to distinguish the good from the bad**, though this did not mean that in the end she was to save a single one from destruction. So Odysseus set out and began to beg from them one after the other, working from left to right and stretching out his hand to each like one who had been a beggar all his life. They gave him food out of pity ...

At once Antinous ... cried. ‘May I ask, sir, why you brought this fellow to town? **Haven't we tramps in plenty to pester us with their wants and pollute our dinners?** Are you so dissatisfied with the numbers collected here to eat your master's food that you must ask this extra guest to join the gathering?'

‘Antinous,' the swineherder answered him, ‘**you maybe nobly born but there's nothing handsome in your speech. Who would take it on himself to press hospitality on a wandering stranger, unless he were some worker for the public good, a prophet, a physician, a shipwright, or even a minstrel whose songs might give pleasure? For all the world over such guests as those are welcomed, whereas nobody would call a beggar in to eat him out of house and home**. But of all the suitors you are always hardest on Odysseus’ servants and of all of them hardest on me.'

'Enough now!' Telemachus prudently interposed: ... ‘Antinous, I appreciate your fatherly concern on my behalf and your anxiety that I should order the stranger out of the house. God forbid such a thing! Give him something yourself. I don't grudge it you; indeed I wish you would. Have no fear, either, of offending my mother or any of the royal servants by your charity. But there's no such idea in your head. **You'd far sooner eat the food yourself than give it away!'**

'Your alms, kind sir !' Odysseus said. 'I am sure you are not the meanest of these lords. Indeed, I take you for the noblest here, since you look every inch a king. Good reason why you should give me a bigger dole than the rest - and I'd sing your praises the wide world over. **Time was when I too was one of the lucky ones with a rich house to live in, and I have often given alms to such a vagabond as myself, no matter who he was or what he came for. Hundreds of servants I had and plenty of all that one needs to live in luxury and take one's place as a wealthy man. But Zeus - for same good reason of his own, no doubt - stripped me of all I had**.'…

'What god,' exclaimed Antinous, '**has inflicted this plague on us to spoil our dinner?** Stand out there in the middle and keep clear of my table, or I'll give you the sort of Egypt and Cyprus you won't relish! The audacity and impudence of the rogue! He has only to pester each man in turn, and they give him food without a thought. For they all have plenty before them, and nobody shows restraint or consideration when it comes to being generous with other people's goods [Telemachus' and Penelope's household].'

Odysseus prudently drew back and said: `Ah, I was wrong in thinking that your brains might match your looks! You wouldn't give so much as a pinch of salt from your larder to a retainer of your own, you that sit here at another man's table and can't bring yourself to take a bit of hiss bread and give it to me, though there's plenty there.'

This roused Antinous to real fury. 'I swear you shall not get away from here in triumph. Your insolence has settled it.' And picking up a stool he let fly and struck Odysseus full on the right shoulder where it joins the back.

Odysseus said: 'Listen to me, you lords that are wooing our illustrious queen! ...If there are **any gods and powers that can avenge a beggar,** I hope Antinous will be dead before his wedding day.'... But the rest of them felt the utmost indignation, and the general sense was expressed by one young gallant who said: '**Antinous, you did wrong to strike the wretched vagabond. You're a doomed man if he turns out to be some god from heaven. And the gods do disguise themselves as strangers from abroad, and wander round our towns in every kind of shape to see whether people are behaving themselves or getting out of hand.'"**[xli]

This fine literary creation reveals various ways that Greeks practice hospitality to destitute wandering guests along with the deep social tensions between aristocrats and the needy. The question is whether the nobles, who are defined socially by the way they keep their distance from the disreputable beggar and swine-herder, are truly noble in their demonstrative class-disdain. The swine-herder takes it upon himself to teach the nobility: **you may be nobly born but there's nothing handsome in your speech**. Note these disdainful attitudes corrupt not only the aristocrats in the king's home but also the self-employed goat-herder only one step above the swine-herder and farther up the social ladder than the wandering decrepit beggar. The goat-herder who works for a living sets himself apart from what he sees as parasitic beggars, who reject hard work and prefer to be mendicant beggars.

Odysseus tries to teach the nobility the precariousness of fortune and therefore of their haughty station which they regard as their inborn right:

"Time was when I too was one of the lucky ones with a rich house to live in, and I have often given alms to such a vagabond as myself, no matter who he was or what he came for. Hundreds of servants I had and plenty of all that one needs to live in luxury and take one's place as a wealthy man. But Zeus - for same good reason of his own, no doubt - stripped me of all I had."

But beyond class considerations, there is a Greek religious argument for compassion to the stranger, for Zeus is their protector. Hosts are duly warned that the gods are always testing our hospitality by disguising themselves as poor vagabonds to test our virtue and, if necessary, to punish us with a sudden change of fate. Often those wanderers were religious pilgrims put up in local temples and supported by fellow Greeks who worshipped the same gods. [xlii]

Rabbinic Honor for the Giver of Tzedakah

Biblical and Rabbinic hospitality are continuous with an extensive tzedakah system that not only mandates inviting the widow, orphans and stranger to one's festival table (Deut. 16: 13-14), but grants them access to the leftovers in one's fields and, in the Rabbinic system, provides daily and weekly allowances for the sustenance of the poor. In Rabbinic municipal tzedakah, the definition of residency or citizenship in the Jewish community is manifest in obligatory participation of all citizens in the daily and weekly support of their destitute national brothers, whether they are local residents or visiting Jews from elsewhere. However it is to be noted that for Rabbinic society, which is committed to a complete defense against the triumphant paganism of the majority, hospitality to the pagan became problematic especially in sharing food that was so much involved with religious observances in pagan life.

As with Greek *euergesia,* the ability to distribute tzedakah involves some social prestige, a pride in being a donor who bears responsibility. It is a privilege to give, even though it is also an obligation, and so the right/privilege to give tzedakah is not to be denied even to the poor. For like the Greeks, the Rabbinic Jews also feel that active giving is honorable, while the passive, the dependent, the merely receptive, is humiliating. Receiving one-sidedly is embarrassing and giving is a source of pride. Pride in being able to contribute to the social whole is the basis of self-respect:

> "When poor persons give a coin to the *kuppah* (tzedakah fund) or a slice of bread to the *tamkhui* (the food collection plate), it is *accepted* from them. Yet if they did not give, they are *not required* to do so. If they were given new clothes (as tzedakah) and returned to worn out (used) ones, they are accepted. Yet if they did not give, they are not required to do so." (Mishna Peah 4:10)

On one hand, the poor are not required to make a contribution because they do not have enough even for themselves and what they do have maybe the result of a tzedakah allocation. Yet if the poor want to give tzedakah, then the community should honor them by taking their gift however meager seriously and thus showing him respect. Why is it so important for the poor to be able to give tzedakah? They are anyway recipients of funds and their total contribution will be very small? For the poor to be able to give makes them active participants in a socially-valued behavior. This is the opposite the indigent's feeling of shame for always being passive recipients. The 20th century kabbalist Rav Yehuda Leib Ashlag[xliii] treats this aspect of the psychology of the poor as a "law of nature:"[13]

> "Once a rich person called a [poor] person from the marketplace and fed him, gave him to drink, gave him gold and silver and every precious item daily and every day he added more gifts and so on. In the end the rich person asked: Tell me, have I finally fulfilled all your wishes?

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[13] In his commentary on *Matan Torah*, the Giving of the Torah, Ashlag characterizes the giving of tzedakah as an expansion of the Hillel's one central principle: "*love your neighbor as yourself* (Leviticus 19:18) and the rest is commentary" (TB Shabbat 31a).

He answered: No, not all my wishes have been fulfilled, for it would have been so good and pleasant if all the property and the desirable goods that I have received could have been achieved by my own effort, just as you earned them, rather than receiving them as gifts of grace from your hand. The rich person replied: If so, then no human being was created whose full wishes could be fulfilled.

"It is natural that, on one side, one tastes all this great goodness ... and, on the other, it is hard to suffer the shame of all this abundance that the rich one grants every time. **For it is a natural law in the world that the recipient feels shame and impatience when receiving free gifts from the giver who acts out of *hesed* and feels mercy for him.** A second law is that no one can fulfill all of another's desires because it will be lacking the character of **self-possession, of something one has earned oneself**. …

"This bad taste of shame and impatience/ unbearableness when one receives something from others out of pity/*hesed* comes from the Creator who is also self-sufficient i.e. never receives a good from others. [Since our soul derives from God], so **at our root it is despicable and hateful to us [to receive].**
By contrast, we feel great pleasure, sweetness and gentleness whenever there is any influence/affluence/ *shefa* we can shower on others, for that is our root in God who pours out abundance on all."

The poor also derive pleasure from being God-like, in granting their resources to others in need, and that should not be denied them, though they should not be coerced to give the little they have. There is, however, a debate whether one without means and who validly receives tzedakah is ***required*** to make a contribution or simply ***allowed*** to make such a contribution, even if it effectively adds nothing to the total of tzedakah funds available to the poor.

"Mar Zutra says:[xliv] 'Even the poor who are supported by tzedakah *must* give tzedakah.'" (TB Gittin 7b)[xlv xlvi xlvii]

Erich Fromm, the psychologist, expresses the extreme pain of the poor who cannot afford to give:

"Poverty beyond a certain point may make it impossible to give, and is so degrading, not only because of the suffering it causes directly, but because of the fact that it deprives the poor of the joy of giving."[xlviii]

What is shared both by Greek philanthropy, which marks the wealthy giver as an aristocrat of means, and by Rabbinic municipal tzedakah, which requires and encourages egalitarian participation in the duties of all citizens, even of very moderate means, is the honor of being a donor and the shame of being a recipient.

Let us explore Aristotle on wealth, beneficence, and honor with the scholarly help of Reggie Kidd:

"Aristotle understands that the root of contemporary social life lies in the putting to work of wealth in the form of beneficence, the doing of good. Wealth consists in the putting to work and in the use of goods rather than in their mere possession (*Art of Rhetoric* 1361a28).

"The return on wealth used in this manner is honor (1361a33). Aristotle observes ... symbiotic relationships between wealthy people who strive for honor and poorer people who aim at benefits. 'Both parties should receive a larger share from the friendship, but not a larger share of the same thing: the superior should receive the larger share of honour, the needy one the larger share of profit, for honour is the due reward of virtue and beneficence, while need obtains the aid it requires in pecuniary gain. The same principle is seen to obtain in public life.' (*Nichomachean Ethics* devoted to Friendship, Book 8, 1159b12).

> "Aristotle fully expects the needy to be 'lovers of money' and the wealthy to be 'lovers of honor'; it is against this backdrop that Plutarch's railing against those who have the opportunity to pursue greater honor but go after more money instead can be appreciated (*Moralia* 523C-528B, 819E-825F; 112=113). Applied in public life, the principle means that the poor contribute their political and social allegiance, and the rich limit their consumption and accumulation by spending their wealth on their cities and by donating their time to the holding of unpaid municipal offices."[xlix]

This concern for honor is prevalent in Biblical wisdom literature as well and continues in the medieval moral advice books about perfecting one's character:

> "Generosity is that trait through which man can attain great heights; when dedicated to the good it is indeed most praiseworthy. By means of this quality, one may attain many lofty heights in this world and in the world to come, as it is said, *"One's gifts make room for one, and bring one before great personages*" (Proverbs 18 : 6). Because of his gifts, kings and nobles will love him and so will every man. **There is nothing in the world like generosity for getting the world to love you,** and even in the world-to-come the generous man will receive a good reward because of his gifts."
> (*Orchot Tzadikim,* 15th C. Germany, unknown author, Chapter 17: On Generosity)

However, in the Jewish tradition the gifts that earn social position are directed to the poor, not to the rich or to their cultural institutions.

Societies of Reciprocal Giving versus Societies without Reciprocity: Seth Schwartz on the Mediterranean Culture of Giving and its Discontents

The historian of rabbinic culture, Seth Schwartz,[l] has investigated the "reciprocity ethics" of Mediterranean societies and contrasted it with an ethics that consciously rejects reciprocity such as Jesus' call to love one's enemy and to host the least desirable members of society, who cannot repay your kindness. Similarly, Rabbinic tzedakah, when given in secret or as a tax or as an interest free loan, manifests dimensions of the culture of "anti-reciprocity." For anonymous or compulsory contributions do not generate fame or obligate gratitude by the shamed beneficiary. Nor is there a whiff of profit for, or deference to, the lender. Schwartz has offered a striking and interesting theory which is certainly true of some major strands in Greco-Roman versus biblical, Rabbinic and Christian civilization. However, as Schwartz would readily agree, this is not an exhaustive dichotomy that typifies all the diverse views of giving within each culture. While I have some disagreements with the way Schwartz maps these categories, I find much that is useful and will now integrate them into my own mapping, while citing his succinct descriptions.

Let us begin with his major distinction between societies based on personal reciprocity and corporate solidarity. Schwartz writes:

"Let us posit that there exist **two ways of imagining societies**."

> "(1) In the first conception, societies are bound together by densely overlapping **networks of relationships of personal dependency constituted and sustained by reciprocal exchange**. There is ample ancient attestation for it, especially in Greece (especially in more aristocratic circles) and Rome. Certainly it was shared by such diverse thinkers as Aristotle[li] and Seneca.[lii] In this view, reciprocity generated primarily social cohesion, though its tendency to inegalitarianism was acknowledged.

> "If a man does a favour for you, you must do one for him in return. In a passage of lyric didacticism, Seneca envisions a universe of circulating favours, represented by the Graces, the word in Greek usually used to translate *beneficia* (favours).
>
> "Why is the chorus [of the Graces], hand in hand, a ring turning on itself? Because the course of a favour passing from hand to hand returns none the less to the giver, and the fairness of the whole is lost, if it is anywhere interrupted, and it is most beautiful if it holds together and preserves the chain." (Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 1.4.2)
>
> "Favours are here envisaged as passing from hand to hand in a continuous unbroken circle, ending up at their original bestower. A favour deserved a favour in return; the greater the favour, the greater the return favor." [liii]

In this first conception, social cohesion is generated by *unequal* hierarchal exchanges in its ideal forms in at least three types of ancient societies in the classical world:

> (1a) tribal exchanges of personal gifts that build up interdependencies (Marcel Mauss' tribal anthropology);
> (1b) informal tribal and formalized Roman patronage and
> (1c) Greek *euergesia*.

(1b) Informal Tribal and Formalized Roman Patronage

The tales of David and Saul are typical of informal political patronage built on loyalty between gift givers. David constantly chides Saul for failing to reciprocate good for good and Saul agrees: "You are more righteous than I for you have granted me goodness (favors, *tovah*), and I have compensated you with evil (*ra'ah*)... So let God reward you for that goodness (favor)" (I Samuel 24: 17-19). These tales presuppose not an abstract, rule-oriented morality of impartial justice, but an ethos of balanced exchanges of favors and loyalty. Not only are material and political aid requited, but so are gifts honoring someone's status. Seth Schwartz characterizes this as typically Mediterranean reciprocity:

> "David (in his early life an 'outlaw' pastoralist and brigand) and the judges (who lived, the Bible repeatedly reminds us, at a time when "*there was no king in Israel and each man did what was right in his eyes*"), are the subjects of stories that portray them approximately as idealized Mediterranean men.... The entire narrative cycle is built around David's doomed or failed formal Mediterranean-style reciprocal relationships, with Saul, Jonathan, Ahimelekh, son of Ahituv, priest of Nob, and his son Eviatar, and with Absalom, among others." [liv]

This mixture of material patronage, placing others under one's patriarchal protection, and building up of one's reputation by acquiring clients became institutionalized in Rome. Roman authority was organized as a hierarchal network of **personal loyalty** where clients were expected to feel and express gratitude and loyalty toward benefactors. Roman patronage has its own terminology. A *patron,* like an adoptive father, offers a *benefice* to a *client* who, by accepting the gift, enters a relationship of *obligation* to someone to whom he earlier owed nothing. The patron would of course not offer any benefice unless he thought the client had something to offer in return – political, military or financial. Thus patronage is a self-interested system of reciprocity that contributes not only to the power but to the relative *dignitas*, social honor, of the patron, who often stands for election to high office and needs the client's votes, influence and, often, muscle. Such "reciprocity-based systems tend toward inequality; and they are often experienced as oppressive." [lv]

Roman *euergesia* accompanied the increased hellenization of Roman culture in the 1st C. BCE after the conquest of the Hellenist Eastern Roman Empire by Pompey. But it also played a special political role in the bid of great generals with spoils of war to appeal for political support in quasi-democratic Rome. Pompey built a great stone theatre and Julius Cesar built a new forum and where they sponsored popular spectacles, like Pompey's gladiatorial battles with wild animals – 500 lions and the first 18 elephants and a rhinoceros seen in Rome. Roman reforms promoted by conservative senators sought to restrict conspicuous consumption of luxuries with sumptuary laws that limit the amount of silverware to be displayed at a banquet or the amount of money spent on funerals. But this legislation was singularly ineffective.

(1c) Greek *euergesia* (according to Schwartz).

> "Euergetism is the cultural practice of benefaction, memoralization and honor characteristic of urban life in the Hellenistic world and the early and high Roman Empire. Euergetism was a reciprocal relationship - the benefactor shouldered his (or more rarely, her) city's public expenses and was repaid with honor and commemoration by citizens - an adaptation of patronage to the communitarian ideology of the later Greek and Roman city, or alternatively a kind of synthesis oligarchy and democracy whose ceremonial manifestations contained features of both." [lvi]
>
> "[Euergertism] is private benefaction to corporate entities (from the Greek *eu- ergetes*, benefactor).... This practice could be seen as constituting a resurgence of oligarchic ideology in a still notionally democratic political environment: **wealthy citizens were expected** (in some places and at some times this expectation approximated a demand) to pay for a disproportionate amount of the public expenses of their cities, but in return for this they won the approbation and loyalty of the citizen body as a whole. The act of benefaction thus served the rich as a way of celebrating their wealth and dramatizing and institutionalizing their civic pride and civic dominance. The citizen body reciprocated by voting to pass decrees honoring its benefactors, by providing them with symbolic gifts such as gold crowns, the right to sit in the front row in the municipal theater, and monumental statues erected in the public marketplace or another public space, accompanied by an inscription commemorating the community's gratitude. The practice of euergetism thus also allowed the citizenry to display its own **civic pride**, in addition to its corporate solidarity and its enduring self-conception as an egalitarian or democratic body, not to mention its careful maintenance of classical Greek traditions.
>
> "In the first century of the Roman Empire, which corresponds to the last century of the Second Temple period, euergetism emerged as a major political tool; Rome relied increasingly on its alliance with city councilors, especially in the urbanized east, whose hold on their fellow citizens depended to a large extent on the practice of municipal benefaction and on the prestige and political leverage they secured thereby. Another objective of benefaction might be perpetuation of the fame and memory of the donor." [lvii]

(2) The society based on idealistic corporate solidarity is shaped by **shared ideals** (piety, wisdom) **or myths** (for example, about common descent). That solidarity is not conditioned by reciprocity, says Schwartz:

> "Even though the family clearly enjoys legitimacy as a legal category, its authority is severely limited, and in narratives its value is constantly questioned. Instead, the Torah advocates that all Israelites be bound together by **unconditional love, *ahavah*** (Lev. 19:18), which is presented as the foundation of Israelite society and law. It is also in the background of legislation mandating systematic relief for the poor and the weak in a way manifestly meant to restrain the proliferation of relationships of dependency between individual Israelites. The Torah does embrace reciprocity and reciprocity-based relationships of dependency as it embraces honor but regards all these as characteristic of the relations not among Israelites but between God and Israel alone."[lviii]

"I would argue that the Torah's prescriptions constitute mediterraneanism's nearly perfect antithesis... [with the exception of the Judges and the David-Saul narratives]. Nevertheless, on the whole, the non-Pentateuchal biblical books have little good to say about Mediterranean culture either. Instead, **the Torah, for its part, has a radically anti-Mediterranean vision of Israelite society**: the only fully legitimate relationship of personal dependency for Israelites is that with their God, who is their father, master, friend, and lover; hence the importance of charity, **a type of redistribution intentionally set up so as to hinder the proliferation of personal ties of dependency**.

"The only individual who is to be regarded as unconditionally honorable is, once again, God, though parents and elders are to be at least respected (or in other passages feared). Consequently, the vendetta-revenge for wounded honor - has no place among the Israelites (Lev i9.18). Israelites are not to be bound together by ties of personal dependency, whether in the form of vassalage, clientele, or friendship: **the Torah regards even the family, with remarkable equivocality.** "**Amoral familism**" was not to be an option. Stories were told about such behavior (for example, [the vengeance after the rape of Dinah in] Gen 34), but it was strongly condemned (Gen 49.5-7). Rather, Israelites are united by shared devotion to God and his laws, and by a peculiar type of unconditional love (*ahavah*), or sense of group solidarity. The Israelites are thus meant to be more or less **equal** one to the other and slaves only to God, not to other (Israelite) men, with the accumulation of landholding expressly forbidden. There is to be no conventional aristocracy."[14]

However I would like to limit somewhat the application of this concept of "solidarity without reciprocity" as it concerns some of the Biblical narratives of tzedakah we have seen. First, while "*love your neighbor as yourself, I am God*" (Lev. 19:18) may be understood as an unconditional mandate to give charity, it is not touted as the reason for giving agricultural gifts to the poor, orphans and strangers in Leviticus 19 nor for tzedakah in Rabbinic texts. The Biblical rationales, as we have seen, appear to be God's ownership of the land and God's love of the poor. Alternatively, the reason is presented as a mythic, non-ethnic solidarity with the stranger, for we too were strangers in the land of Israel and we should have a sensitivity to injustice suffered by the weak.

More important the longest and most detailed Biblical treatment of material aid for the needy in Leviticus 25 is justified by **solidarity with reciprocity** and it does promote **familial values of loyalty not dependent on common belief or practice.** One's first redeemer is one's first of kin. While no personal patronage is developed, we do have a prime example of egalitarian solidarity based on systemic reciprocity in which brothers take care of one another even though it is not guaranteed on a one to one quid pro quo basis. In conclusion, **when Seth Schwartz argues that Biblical tzedakah is "a type of redistribution intentionally set up so as to hinder the**

[14]"The Torah, and the biblical corpus in general, also rejected another element of Mediterranean culture, **connectivity**... The tendency of people all around the shore of the sea to engage in constant small-scale exchange with neighboring settlements, cities, and islands. This exchange could take the form of trade, gift exchange, even piracy and brigandage; the concept acquires its coherence from its economic role:

Now, many groups have **idealized autarky**, but for the Jews such idealization had a special edge, since it was fuelled by a strong sense of group particularism. Dependence on other nations - which was not necessarily identical with political domination by them, since it could include indebtedness to resident aliens-was seen as a divine curse (Dt 21). The God of the Torah was Israel's only God, and was jealous to boot. The Torah thus set obstacles in the way of Israelites' socialization with their neighbors, obstacles raised still higher in other biblical texts. **As among the classical Athenians, among the ancient Jews a heightened sense of group solidarity, egalitarianism, and particularism went hand in hand**. The Jews' texts express the pervasive fear that contact with non-Israelites would lead Israel to whore after alien gods (as the Bible puts it, imagining the relationship of God and Israel as that of husband and wife). Thus, no encouragement of interstate trade, even in the modest of form." (Seth Schwartz, *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society? Reciprocity and Solidarity in Ancient Judaism*, 26-27)

proliferation of personal ties of dependency," he is correct regarding personal patronage and thus obsequious dependency on benefactors is minimized, but in my judgment he is incorrect regarding another kind of dependency - the reciprocal co-dependency of brothers. In Rabbinic sources on tzedakah the beneficiaries are still very disturbed even when receiving anonymous tzedakah. When Rabbinic tax-based tzedakah is provided through the bureaucracy of the municipality then almost all direct dependence on other individuals as benefactors is eliminated.

In summary, Greek philanthropy - motivated by civic pride and aristocratic *noblesse oblige* – understands itself both as an expression of human excellence in character and as an investment in the public institutions that promote human culture. Gifts to the public are not purchases of power or political market transactions, however the grateful and honorable polis will reciprocate in honors proportional to the gift. Reflected glory from one's social contributions is a normal expectation and one who would defer all honor would be thought as irrational, in violation of the golden mean of proportionality in character, in their lack of pride.

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[i] Edited circa 200 CE in Eretz Yisrael under Roman rule

[ii] How is this innovation retroactively rooted in the interpretation of the Torah?
Deuteronomic loans are read as "gifts for the poor" to serve their individualized needs. Loans become Rabbinic Tzedakah as gifts, since after all loans given before the Sabbatical cancellation of debts often become *defacto* gifts. While in Deuteronomy 15 the loans were recommended but voluntary, in the Mishna they became gifts now legally collectible by coercion.

[iii] Mishna Shekalim 5:6; Sifrei Re'eh 117.

[iv] "So too one can arrange a first marriage for a girl or boy on Shabbat for that is a matter of a mitzvah, and of course arrange a tutor to teach children book learning or a vocation, for that too is a mitzvah. Without an honest way to make a living one without a profession will engage in robbery. But the final agreement and the exact amounts should not be settled on Shabbat." (Arukh HaShulkhan OH Shabbat #306)

[v] Arukh HaShulkhan OH Shabbat #306:15

[vi] Hannah Arendt points out that Greek politics, where tzedakah has no role, is based on citizenship, but not on families or tribes. The financial solidarity of brothers sharing land can be extended to political brotherhood, but not for the Greeks.

[vii] *Phil-adelphia* – the city of brotherly love which is also the Greek name for Amman, Jordan.

[viii] "The Greeks, from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. on, used the adjective *philanthropos* as an epithet of the gods, who were said to bestow gifts and other benefits upon humankind." (Birger A. Pearson, "Philanthropia in the Greco-Roman World and in Early Christianity," *The Emergence of the Christian Religion*, 188) . The earliest uses of the adjective *philanthropos* are found in Athenian drama, both tragedy and comedy, of the fifth century B.C.E. Aeschylus opens his famous tragedy *Prometheus Bound* with a speech put into the mouth of "Power" (Cratos) describing the Titan god Prometheus's fate and the reasons for it. Prometheus has been bound by Zeus to a rock for bestowing the gift of fire to mortals: "Such is his offense, wherefore he is bound to make requital to the gods, that so he may be lessoned to brook the sovereignty of Zeus and forbear his *philanthropia*" (lines 8-11).

Socrates is quoted as saying, "I fear that because of my *philanthropia* they think that I not only pour myself out copiously to anyone and everyone without payment, but that I would even pay something myself, if anyone would listen to me" (In Plato's *Euthyphro* 3D). The comic poet Aristophanes is featured as one of the dinner companions in Plato's great dialogue the Symposium. In his speech Aristophanes refers to Eros (Love) as the "most *philanthropia* of the gods" 189C).

The rhetorical usage of the term *philanthropia* influenced popular philosophical ethics, especially in the Stoicism of the empire. The lame Stoic preacher Epictetus cites as an ethical example the famous Cynic philosopher Diogenes, a true servant of Zeus who loved everyone and "was so gentle and kind-hearted (*philanthropia*) that he gladly took upon himself all those troubles and physical hardships for the sake of the common weal" (Arrian, *Epict. Diss.* 3.24.64). Plutarch can say that God is "not only immortal and blessed but also humane, protective and manifests *philanthropia* " (*Com. not*. 32.1075E).

"The greatest frequency [of the term *philanthropia* appears] in relation to Asklepios, the god of healing and the patron of physicians. ...Alongside the direct intervention of the god was the medical treatment offered by physicians, whose patron Asklepios was. The god Asklepios was acclaimed as a god who gave help inexpensively, being

satisfied with small thank-offerings. Indeed, he was praised for healing those unable to pay." (Birger Pearson, "Philanthropia," 191)

[ix] The word "philanthropy" first appears Greek literature in Aeschylus (525 – 456 BCE, Athens) in his prize-winning play *Prometheus Bound.* Prometheus, the demi-god who stole fire for humanity, was eternally punished by Zeus for his generosity which was regarded as a rebellion. He is the first philanthropist = lover of humankind and his gift was the source of human arts and power in an act of violating the status quo in favor of human progress. ("All arts of mortals from Prometheus sprung"). Never before Prometheus had the Olympian gods manifested *philanthropia* to humans and seldom is it ever attributed to them afterwards, although Zeus shows kindness to wandering strangers in Homer. Some minor gods like the god of healing, Asclepius are praised for that virtue. In any case this generosity is not directed to the poor who are viewed chiefly as source of social unrest (H. Mayer, *Charity,* 7-10).

[x] Scott Davis, "Philanthropy" in J. B. Schneewind, *Giving: Western Ideas of Philanthropy*, .2-3

[xi] H. Mayer, *Charity,* 12.

[xii] B. Pearson, "Philanthropia," 190

[xiii] "**In the actual workings of a Greek city-state, the giving and receiving of *philanthropia* was voluntary in theory but often involuntary in practice, especially in the time of the empire**. The institution of the ***liturgy*** (lit. "work of/for the people") is the term used for **'public service' rendered by private citizens at their own expense.** In classical Athens (fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E.), men of the wealthiest families were required to take turns, usually for a year at a time, in assuming the costs of one of many state functions. These liturgies paid the costs of religious temples and festivals, public works, ships for the navy, dramatic performances, and the like. This institution was a basic constituent of the administration of Greek cities (*poleis*) for many centuries, through the Hellenistic and imperial periods. Thus, what in our society would be funded either by government taxes or by voluntary donations would be funded by these 'liturgies' virtually imposed on citizens of means." (B. Pearson, "Philanthropia," 190)

"However, during the imperial period, the system of liturgies was expanded to result in the compulsion of public service from all levels of society .. Especially in the troubled third century, the fiscal burdens imposed upon people in the cities in the form of liturgies and taxes became so great that flight was the last recourse. *Anachoresis*, 'withdrawal,' was a term often used in the case of flight from fiscal burdens." (B.Pearson, "Philanthropia," 191).

"*Leitourgia*, often translated '**liturgies**,' consisted in the ancient world of any 'p**ublic service performed by private citizens at their own expense**.' Thus we have the modern phrase for a religious liturgy, a 'worship service.' In the Graeco-Roman world these liturgies were public, fiscal obligations of members of the leading class to their fellow citizens and their fulfillment could be onerous. In classical Athens the ordinary *leitourgia,* or liturgies, were the *gymnasiarchia* (funding education and physical training), *charegia* (paying for the choruses that performed at public festivals) and *hestiasis* (funding public feasts),

All leitourgia included sacrifice; thus the essential association of the word with religious ritual practices. (Greek Jews translated Temple service as liturgy.) **Such liturgies did not include any formal concept of 'service' to the poor and needy as such until the rise of Christianization, when Christian leaders began to use political power to apply their traditional scriptural understanding of the poor, as a social group deserving special attention, to the economics of Graeco-Roman 'gift economy.'** This gift economy is epitomized by the fluid obligations and power dynamics of the patronage systems." (Susan Holman, *The Hungry,* 20)

"Those whose *leitourgia* funded performances and feasts had similar stated aims: to assert social power and do one's honorable duty. The donor fulfilled civic obligations while the recipients, by participating, were implicitly expected to show their gratitude by granting the benefactor praise, honor, and loyalty. **Social inequality was not only understood, but essential for the system to work**. Aristotle operates on this premise in his distinction between *leitourgia* and friendship, when he says that friendship expects an equal exchange of goods or value between the parties." (Susan Holman, *The Hungry,* 32)

[xiv] However in ancient Greek lyrics of Homer Zeus is praised a host of the wanderer and in Odysseus dressed as an old beggar is treated respectfully by the simple folk, though disdained by the aristocratic suitors of his wife.

[xv] Gildas Hamel, *Poverty,* 194

[xvi] Sharon Vaughan summarizes Aristotle's thoughts about "helping the poor" in his book, *Politics*:

"The naturally superior human beings, the elite citizenry of males, require the menial services of the naturally inferior women, slaves and foreigners, so as to enjoy the leisure time necessary for living well. The wealthy citizen may out of generosity – not obligation – provide resources for the citizens who are relatively poor to attend to their essential leisure for human flourishing. But demagogues who would distribute surplus revenue to the people are wasteful. '**Helping the poor in this way is like pouring water into proverbial leaking jug'** (*Politics*, 1320a30-31). However for Aristotle that goal is limited to a tiny minority of human beings residing in the geographic area of Athens. Artisans, farm laborers and others excluded from citizenship are merely vulgar, useful but not worthy of living well, so they are not for Aristotle objects for philanthropy. Most citizens need no state or private support to live fulfilled lives of the polis. The only grounds for supporting the poor is to maintain political stability since excessive poverty in a polis just as any other form of immoderation is unhealthy. In that circumstance one may support the poor to find an occupation or to settle land"

Aristotle's *Politics* 1324a24;1325a7; 1329b40 – 1330a8; 1330b8-12; 1254b12-25; 1260a-1260b6; 1278a1-25; 1328b38 – 1329a2 summarized in S. Vaughan, *Poverty, Justice, and Western Political Thought*.

[xvii] "Poverty in the Greco-Roman world generally represented something to be avoided. Loss of wealth resulting in poverty was something to be feared, for this also meant a loss of status and a loss of a sense of self-worth. There were two main kinds of "poverty" in Greek usage, *penia* and *ptochia*. *Penia* was 'poverty' or 'need': a 'poor' person in the sense of one who was barely able to make a living. This, indeed, was the condition of the vast majority of the population of the ancient world, silent people whose voices are not represented in the literature that comes from the pens of those with the leisure and education to write for posterity. In fact, it included just about anybody who had to work with his hands to make a living. Manual labor was not respected in Greek society.

The other kind of poverty, *ptochia*, was much more severe - one who was utterly destitute, reduced to begging. And beggars were generally regarded with fear and loathing. Plato would banish beggars from his ideal state, on the grounds that they were likely to be thieves, pickpockets, temple robbers, or other criminal types (Resp. 8:552D). The Latin comic poet Plautus (3rd century BCE.) put it this way: '**You do a beggar bad service by giving him food and drink**' (*Trin.* 339).21 Such a person was beyond the pity that would induce the well-to-do to help the penurious, that is, those with inadequate means. In short, beggars, the *ptochoi*, were usually outside the pale of Greco-Roman philanthropy." (B. Pearson, "*Philanthropia"*)

[xviii] H. Mayer, *Charity,* 13.

[xix] S. Holman, *The Hungry*, 32

[xx] Marcel Mauss the anthropologist describes giving in tribal societies, but it applies in many ways also to Aristotle's gift giving: "The transfer of goods without contractual payment in kind or in money. The recipients will typically give the objects away to yet others, and eventually the initial donor will be a recipient; but none of this is charity as we think of it. The donors are not securely and predictably better off than the recipients, and the point of the giving is not to provide material assistance to the recipients. The whole cycle of giving and receiving is viewed as a way of securing honor, prestige, or recognized social standing; and the practice serves to reinforce solidarity and the sense of interdependence of the members of the community. "(J. B. Schneewind, "Philosophical Ideas of Charity Some Historical Reflections" in J. B. Schneewind, editor of *Giving: Western Ideas of Philanthropy*, 55)

[xxi] "The magnificent man underwrites a building or offers a sacrifice in thanks for benefits received or in hope of benefits to come. It is a display of prudence, a **form of reciprocity** through which he maintains his status with the powers that be. Through such acts the city as a whole benefits, but should there be benefit to the poor, it is at best secondhand. Their families and kin, not strangers are expected to take care of them." (S. Davis, "Philanthropy" in J. B. Schneewind, *Giving*, 2-3)

[xxii] S. Davis, "Philanthropy" in J. B. Schneewind, *Giving*, 8

[xxiii] Scott Davis, Philanthropy as a Virtue in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages," 2-3

[xxiv] "The **civic ethos** flourished from the beginning of the empire to its end ...The great expenses of the cities - the provision of wood and oil for the baths, the elaborate religious festivals with public banquets and games, the building of temples, aqueducts, and great public structures - were met only in part by taxation. Instead, wealthy individuals, usually men but sometimes women as well, undertook these expenses themselves, spontaneously or as a function of the unsalaried magistracies of their towns-posts which were, moreover, time-consuming and which came to require a large upfront payment. Thus the financial provisions of the cities of the empire resemble less those of modern municipalities or states (although some indirect taxes were collected) and more those of provincial American art galleries and opera companies, which draw part of their funding from government grants (thus taxes) and receipts, but the bulk of their funds from the generosity of wealthy benefactors. Dio Chrysostom could say proudly of his grandfather that on Prusa he 'spent all the wealth he received from his father and his grandfather, so that he had nothing remaining at all.' And he was by no means unique in having beggared himself for his city." (J.E. Lendon, *The Empire of Honor*, 85)

[xxv] The local assemblies in the *demes*, or the national Assembly at Athens, could issue **decrees honoring citizens**, for example, for producing a particularly good performance at the theater, or bringing together an outstanding chorus, or achieving a diplomatic triumph. A higher and more costly honor was to have the decree inscribed on stone. The central Assembly awarded the highest honor of all when it decreed that a **golden crown** be given a particularly outstanding citizen or a decree **inscribed on a stone stele** and set up in the theatre.

The state of Athens lacked the complex system of taxation. The discrepancy between tax receipts and expenditures was made up by a system of "**liturgies.**" A number of the richest citizens of the polis were designated each year to be financially and organizationally responsible for certain state activities: the production of a chorus at the musical and dramatic festivals; supervision of the gymnasium, the public sports ground open to all citizens; production of a banquet for a tribe at festivals; the leadership of a public delegation to a foreign festival; the maintenance of a horse by a cavalryman or bearing all expenses for the maintenance and repair of a warship, and assuming the captainship thereof for the year.

Though these liturgies were not voluntary, there was a definite amount of leeway in their execution. **The person chosen could spend more than was required to get the job done, providing thereby an exceptional pleasure for**

the demos, and a substantial increase in honor for the liturgist. And it was standard procedure in **court cases** for either the prosecutor or the defendant, both of whom had to plead their cases personally, to list in detail services done for the state, either as liturgist or in other capacities, to obtain the sympathy of the jury. The pleader usually claimed that, though required to do the liturgy, he performed it in such a manner as to produce a greater than usual benefit. The pursuit of honor in the Athenian state could be costly. (A.R. Hands)

[xxvi] Icon of a lady with an outstretched right hand from which coins rain down in the gesture of the classical ***megalopsychos***, the person of great soul, hence of open-handed generosity. (P. Brown, *Poverty,* 28)

[xxvii] Peter Brown, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire*, 2-3

[xxviii] Cicero (1st C. CE Rome) in his essay on beneficence recommends to the donor to support the fortification of the walls, build ports and canals for such gifts will not be forgotten for generations. But for fame in one's own generation it is better to give to build theaters, galleries, and temples. (Cicero, *On Duties* II cited in E. Urbach, "Tzedakah," *Zion,* 4)

[xxix] In feasts often the lesser classes were included to reflect a broader solidarity within society. Sometimes the benefactor would provide free dining-couches so the poor might recline like the rich (Paul Veyne, 146). This is reminiscent of Mishna Pesahim 10:1 where even the poor recline with wine at the Seder with provisions provided by the community tzedakah.

[xxx] H. Mayer, *Charity,* 145

[xxxi] Hellenist Jewish use of *philanthropia*: "The Greek word *philanthropia* in the Greek-speaking Judaism of the Greco-Roman Diaspora, is used in much the same way as in the pagan Greek literature. Thus, for example, the word is used of the benevolence shown by rulers to their subjects (III Maccabees). In the Wisdom of Solomon (usually dated to the early 1st C.C.E.), the personified divine Wisdom (Sophia) is said to be "a kindly spirit who teaches the righteous to be "kind". Thus, Sophia shares in God's own philanthropic nature and produces the same quality in God's people.

The best example of a discussion of *philanthropia* as a human virtue is found in the writings of Philo of Alexandria (1st C. C.E.), in his treatise *On the Virtues*. Philo finds illustrations of this virtue in the Law of Moses (the Torah), in regard to both the behavior of Moses himself (52-79) and the legislation that he gave to Israel. The philanthropia of the Mosaic Law is illustrated in its commandments against usury (Exod 22:25; Lev 25:36-37; Deut 23:19; see Virt. 82-87), on the payment of wages to the laborer (Lev 19:13; Dent 24:14-15; see Virt. 88), on improper seizure of debts (Deut 24:10-11; see Virt. 89), on the gleaning of crops by the poor (Lev 19:19; 23:22; see Virt. 90-94), on the first fruits for the priests (Dent 16:1-11; see Virt. 95), on the restoration of a stray animal to its owner (Deut 22:1; see Virt. 96), on sabbatical years (Exod 23:10-11; Lev 25:3ff.; see Virt. 97-98), and on the jubilee year (Lev 25:8ff.; see Virt. 99). These laws were designed for Israelites in their relations with fellow Israelites. But equally humane laws are enjoined upon Israelites in their behavior toward strangers (Lev 19:33-34; see Virt. 102-4), sojourners (Deut 23; see Virt. 105-8), and even enemies (Dent 20:10ff; 21:10-13; Exod 23:4-5; see Virt. 109-18). These examples show that **the purpose of the Mosaic Law is to engender peace and brotherhood among people** (119-20). Philo goes on to give examples of *philanthropia* in the laws regarding slaves (121-24), and even animals (125-47) and plants (148-59): In his concluding remarks on this virtue (161-74), Philo enumerates some of the vices for which *philanthropia* is an antidote. Of course, the ultimate source of *philanthropia* is God, who is described as *philanthropos* in Greco-Jewish literature. Thus, Josephus, in his great work *The Antiquities of the Jews*, begins with an encomium on Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews, who has shown "that God possesses the very perfection of virtue"; Josephus then cites the "majesty of God and his *philanthropia*.. There are no examples of the word *philanthropia* in the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures [It appears only twice in New Testament including God's sending Jesus as savior (Titus 3:4)" (B. Pearson, "*Philanthropia,*" 194)

[xxxii] cited in Stanford Lyman, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, 137-138

[xxxiii] While the Rabbis built their society on taxation, obligatory giving that was more and more well-defined in law and enforced institutionally by coercion, the Greeks did not. In Greek cities there was little taxation rather the upper classes made contributions to the city budget for big items especially when the aristocrats were appointed to important civic offices. Often the city council would call on the wealthy to voluntarily subscribe to *epidoseis* – emergency fund subscriptions. Then the donors were honored by having their names published, but nondonors were shamed because their names did not appear on list that everyone expected to include their name and contribution. In this way the upper class showed their sense of *homonoia* or *concordia,* friendship and solidarity with fellow city members. If they did not voluntarily live up to expectations, then there was infamy! (A.R. Hands, 40-41)

[xxxiv] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*, 39, 41, 74

[xxxv] Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift.* 7

[xxxvi] M. Nussbaum, "Cicero," 204

[xxxvii] The pillar at the threshold of the home appears to be the standard place for the beggar to stand according to the goatherder above who said: "Just the sort to lean against all the door-posts and polish them with his shoulders, begging for scraps!"

[xxxviii] Libations to Zeus accompanied banquets and the presence of a guest would please Zeus, god of traveler. For example:

Alkinos, this is not the better way, nor is it fitting
that the stranger should sit on the ground beside the hearth, in the ashes.
These others are holding back because they await your order.
But come, raise the stranger up and seat him on a silver-studded chair,
and tell your heralds to mix in more wine for us,
so we can pour a libation to Zeus who delights in the thunder. (*Odyssey*, Book ll. 159-164)

[xxxix] In the Homeric ages, hospitality was under the protection of Zeus, the chief deity of the Greek pantheon. Zeus was also attributed with the title 'Xenios Zeus' ('xenos' means stranger).

[xl] Telemachos greets Athena, who is disguised as Mentes, with these words:

With such thoughts, sitting amongst the suitors, he saw Athene
and went straight to the forecourt, the heart within him scandalized
that a guest should still be standing at the doors. He stood beside her
and took her by the right hand, and relieved her of the bronze spear,
and spoke to her and addressed her in winged words: 'Welcome, stranger.
You shall be entertained as a guest among us. Afterward,
when you have tasted diner, you shall tell us what your need is.(Odyssey, Book ll. 118-124*)*

[xli] *Odyssey,* Book XVII circa lines 200 – 500

[xlii] H. Mayer, *Charity,* 12.

[xliii] *Matan Torah* Section 2, 8, 10. One of Rav Ashlag's students created the Kabbalah Center whose most famous student is Madonna whose aptly chosen Hebrew name is Esther.

[xliv] Mar Zutra's halakhic view is accepted by Maimonides but qualified by the commentator Seftei Kohen (*Shakh*) who says “only if the poor have enough to support themselves, otherwise they are *not* obligated to give” (Tur, Yoreh Deah 253:11).

[xlv] Part of a rabbinic midrashic conversation on Nahum 1:12 says that one who sees their food supplies dwindling should give tzedakah and they will be blessed and avoid further poverty and also be rescued from suffering in the world to come.

[xlvi] See Maimonides, Laws of Gifts to the Poor 7:5

[xlvii] Islamic practice: “Moneys have to exceed the amount needed by the giver. If the person is in need of the money that he has, to cover his basic needs, then he is not supposed to pay *zaka*t. There is no point in charging the needy. Jurists have defined the basic needs accurately and realistically. They state that it is what may protect and provide man with bare necessities to make a life, such as housing, food, clothing, etc” (Zakat Foundation of America website)

[xlviii] Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 24

[xlix] Reggie Kidd, *Wealth and Beneficence in the Pastoral Epistles*, SBL #122, 114

[l] Seth Schwartz, *Mediterranean Society?*

[li] *Eudemian Ethics* 7.1.2; 7.10. 14ff

[lii] *De Beneficiis* 1.4.2; cf. Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.22..21

[liii] J.E. Lendon, *The Empire of Honor,* 63

[liv] S. Schwartz, *Mediterranean Society?,* 26-27

[lv] S. Schwartz, *Mediterranean Society?,* 17

[lvi] S. Schwartz, *Mediterranean Society?,*, 77

[lvii] S. Schwartz, *Mediterranean Society,*, 85

[lviii] S. Schwartz, *Mediterranean Society?,* 168