

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
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3854 - Giving sadaqah (charity) to non-Muslims

the question

- 1) It is ok to give sadaqa to non-muslim especially in this country?
- 2) Someone (probably muslim) beg for specific amount of money. What Islam say to deal with such situation? Please also mention this situation when the begger is non_muslim?
- 3) Is the same ruling for the first two question would be applicable to begger who are on drugs/alcohol, etc? It may be possible they may use money for wrong doing.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

1 - It is permissible to give charity - other than the obligatory charity (zakaah etc.) - to poor non-Muslims, especially if they are relatives, on condition that they do not belong to people who are in a state of war against us and have not committed acts of aggression that would preclude our treating them kindly. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Allaah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Verily, Allaah loves those who deal with equity. It is only as regards those who fought against you on account of religion, and have driven you out of your homes, and helped to drive you out, that Allaah forbids you to befriend them. And whosoever will befriend them, then such are the Zaalimoon (wrongdoers those who disobey Allaah” [al-Mumtahinah 60:8-9]

Asmaa' bint Abi Bakr (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: “My mother came to me when she was still a mushrikah - at the time when there was a peace treaty between Quraysh and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) - accompanied by her father. I

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consulted the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), saying, ‘O Messenger of Allaah, my mother has come to me and she is asking for help. Should I uphold the ties of kinship with her?’ He said, ‘Yes, uphold the ties of kinship with her.’” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, no. 2946).

It was narrated that a Jewish woman came begging to ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) and she gave her something. The Jewish woman said to ‘Aa’ishah, “May Allaah protect you from the punishment of the grave.” ‘Aa’ishah did not like that, and when she saw the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) she asked him about it and he said “No.” ‘Aa’ishah said: “Then later on, the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘It has been revealed to me that you will be tried in your graves.’” (Musnad Ahmad, no. 24815).

These two ahaadeeth indicate that it is permissible to give charity to the kuffaar. But it is not permissible to give zakaah funds to the poor among the kuffaar, because zakaah can only be given to Muslims to spend on the poor and needy among them as mentioned in the aayah of zakaah.

Imaam al-Shaafa'i said: “There is nothing wrong with giving charity to a mushrik as a naafilah (supererogatory) action, but he has no right to charity from the obligatory (zakaah). Allaah praised people who, as He says (interpretation of the meaning): ‘... they give food, inspite of their love for it (or for the love of Him), to the Miskeen (the poor), the orphan, and the captive’ [al-Insaan 76:8].” (Kitaab al-Umm, part 2).

Giving charity to poor Muslims is preferable and more befitting, because spending on them helps them to obey Allaah, and it helps them in both their worldly and spiritual affairs. This helps to strengthen the bonds among Muslims, especially nowadays when the poor among the Muslims far outnumber the rich. And Allaah is the One Whose help we seek.

2 - If the person who is asking for the money is Muslim and is definitely in need, then give him what you can in charity. The same applies even if he is not Muslim. But it is better for Muslims who

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are in need to refrain from begging in the streets. If they have no other choice, they should go to Islamic charity organizations which exist to channel charitable donations to the poor and needy. By the same token, those who want to give charity can also contact reliable charitable organizations so that their charity will reach those who deserve it.

3 - If the person who is asking for money -regardless of whether he is a Muslim or a kaafir - is asking for it in order to commit sin and buy something that is haraam, or he is going to use the money to help him to do something haraam, then it is not permissible to give that charity to him, because by doing so, one is helping him to commit that haraam action. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression” [al-Maa'idah 5:2]

And Allaah knows best.