129664 - There is nothing wrong with treating non-Muslims kindly if they are not fighting us

the question

I am a woman who works and I want to know whether it is permissible for me to give water or food to non-Muslims? There is a Jewish boy at my workplace and when I go out or go to get water, he asks me to bring him some water too. Is it permissible for me to do that?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

There is nothing wrong with showing kindness to non-Muslims, so long as they are not known to be hostile towards Muslims or to be helping our enemies against us. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, Allah 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 Allah forbids you to befriend them. And whosoever will befriend them, then such are the Zalimoon (wrong-doers those who disobey Allah).”

[al-Mumtahanah 60:8-9].

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

That is, He does not forbid you to treat kindly those disbelievers who are not fighting you because of your religion, such as the women and the weak among them.

“deal justly” means to treat them kindly

“and kindly” means fairly.

“Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity”. End quote.

Tafseer Ibn Katheer, 4/446

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said in his commentary on Soorat al-Baqarah (2/294):

With regard to non-Muslims, there is nothing wrong with treating them kindly on condition that they are not among those who are fighting us because of our religion or seeking to drive us from our homes, because Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity.”

[al-Mumtahanah 60:8].

The Muslim will be rewarded for treating these people kindly. Allah, may He be exalted, stated that one of the attributes of the righteous, who are the people of Paradise, is (interpretation of the meaning):

“And they give food, in spite of their love for it (or for the love of Him), to Miskin (poor), the orphan, and the captive”

[al-Insaan 76:8]

–and the captive cannot be anything other than a non-Muslim.

Qataadah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“And they give food, in spite of their love for it (or for the love of Him), to Miskin (poor), the orphan, and the captive”

[al-Insaan 76:8]

–Allah has enjoined kind treatment of captives, and the captives at that time would have been mushrikeen (polytheists).

See: Tafseer at-Tabari, 10/8364

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in al-Majmoo‘ (6/237):

If you give charity to an evildoer or to a non-Muslim such as a Jew, a Christian or a Magian, that is permissible and there will be reward for that in general terms. The author of al-Bayaan said: as-Saymari said: The same applies with regard to a non-Muslim who is in a state of war with the Muslims. The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “And they give food, in spite of their love for it (or for the love of Him), to Miskin (poor), the orphan, and the captive” [al-Insaan 76:8], and it is well known that the captive would be a non-Muslim who was in a state of war with the Muslims. End quote.

And Allah knows best.