212 - Is Accepting Donations from Non-Muslims Permissible?

the question

Can Muslims accept donations from non-Muslims to use in Islamic cause?

Summary of answer

There is nothing wrong with accepting unsolicited gifts and donations from non-Muslims, and it is permissible to spend them on Islamic projects and in other ways.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Islamic Stance on Accepting Gifts from Non-Muslims

Imam Al-Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) gave one of the chapters in his Sahih the title of "Bab Qabul Al-Hadiyah min Al-Mushrikin (Chapter on accepting gifts from the polytheists)," under which heading he listed a number of Hadiths indicating that this is permitted.

Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) commented:

"On this topic, Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi narrated from `Iyyad ibn Himar (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: 'I gave the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) a gift of a she-camel. He asked me, "Have you become Muslim?" I said, "No." He said, "I have been forbidden to accept the gifts of the polytheists."'

Then Al-Hafidh (may Allah have mercy on him) quoted some of the comments made by the scholars to reconcile the texts which indicate that such gifts should be refused with those which indicate that they should be accepted.

(The scholars said that) gifts should be refused when the intention behind them is to win the Muslim over (by softening his heart towards them), and they should be accepted when by doing so there is the hope of befriending that person and opening his heart to Islam.

There is nothing wrong with accepting unsolicited gifts and donations from non-Muslims, and it is permissible to spend them on Islamic projects and in other ways.

The Risks of Asking Non-Muslims for Donations

But asking for donations from non-Muslims carries several risks, such as being humiliated in front of them or being controlled by them.

If there is no danger of such things happening, there is nothing wrong with asking. When he was still in Makkah, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to ask for help for the sake of Da`wah, without any humiliation involved, from some of the polytheists, such as his uncle Abu Talib and others.

There is no humiliation involved in putting out charity boxes or circulating flyers giving account numbers for donations, and so on.

For more details, please see the following answers: 3854, 212, 3238, 2756, 958.

And Allah knows best.