21944 - Ruling on giving charity to one who follows some innovations (bid’ahs)

the question

Is it permissible to give charity and financial help to one who follows some innovations?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Undoubtedly helping a Muslim, relieving his distress, meeting his needs and guarding him against loss are all part of the befriending of one another that is a basic requirement of faith, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“The believers, men and women, are Awliyaa’ (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin (on the people) Al-Ma‘roof (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islam has forbidden); they perform As-Salaah (Iqaamat-as-Salaah), and give the Zakaah, and obey Allaah and His Messenger. Allaah will have His Mercy on them. Surely, Allaah is All-Mighty, All-Wise”

[al-Tawbah 9:71]

This is also indicated by the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “The believer is the mirror of his fellow believer, and the believer is the brother of his fellow believer. He guards him against loss and protects him when he is absent.” Narrated by Abu Dawood, 4918; classed as hasan by al-Albaani.

With regard to the words “he protects him against loss”, Ibn al-Atheer said: A man’s loss may be with regard to handicrafts, commerce, agriculture etc., so his fellow believer supports him and tries to help him to earn a living.

The words “and protects him when he is absent” mean he protects him and defends him as much as he can. See ‘Awn al-Ma’bood.

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The relationship between one believer and another is like a structure, parts of which support other parts,” and he interlaced his fingers. Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 481; Muslim, 2585.

Al-Nawawi said: These words – “The relationship between one believer and another is like a structure, part of which support other parts” – clearly indicate the importance of the Muslims’ rights over one another, and encourage them to show compassion, kindness and support to one another, but not in sin or in anything bad.

There are many texts of the Qur’aan and saheeh Sunnah which speak of such matters, all of them pointing towards befriending, supporting and protecting on the basis of faith and Islam. That must be the basis for loving and hating, giving and withholding, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever gives for the sake of Allaah and withholds for the sake of Allaah, loves for the sake of Allaah and hates for the sake of Allaah, and gets married for the sake of Allaah, has perfected his faith.” Ahmad, 1519; al-Tirmidhi, 2521; Abu Dawood, 4681; classed as hasan by al-Albaani.

People vary with regard to faith and Islam. Some of them fear Allaah and have faith more than others. Thus each person varies in the degree to which he is entitled to the rights of friendship, depending on the degree of his religious commitment, although they all come under the general heading of the friendship that is required in Islam.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Fataawa, 28/209:

Allaah sent the Messengers and revealed the Books so that the religion (worship) would all be for Allaah, so that love would be for His close friends and hate for His enemies; so that His close friends would be honoured and His enemies humiliated; so that the reward would be for His close friends and the punishment would be for His enemies. If good and evil, obedience and disobedience, Sunnah and bid’ah, coexist in a person, then he is deserving of friendship and

reward to the extent that he is good, and he deserves enmity and punishment to the extent that he is bad. So the reasons for honouring and humiliating may coexist in a person; both may coexist in him – such as a poor thief whose hand is cut off for stealing, but he is given enough from the bayt al-maal (treasury) to meet his needs.

This is the basic principle upon which Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah are agreed…

The answer to this question is based on this general principle. Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

There is some bid'ah for which a person may be excused, there is some which reaches the degree of fisq (evildoing) and there is some that reaches the degree of kufr. With regard to those who follow bid'ah that constitutes kufr, it is not permissible to help them at all, even if they call themselves Muslims, because their calling themselves Muslims whilst they persist in that bid'ah that constitutes kufr, even after evidence has been established against them, means that they are akin to the hypocrites who said, "we bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allaah," but Allaah said (interpretation of the meaning):

"Allaah knows that you are indeed His Messenger, and Allaah bears witness that the hypocrites are liars indeed"

[al-Munaafiqoon 63:1]

With regard to innovation that constitutes fisq (evildoing), or for which a person may have a justifiable excuse, the fact that they follow bid'ah does not mean that we are not allowed to help them. They should be helped against their kaafir enemies because they are undoubtedly better than those kuffaar. Al-Baab al-Maftooh, 1/66

But they should be prevented from spending this money on establishing or propagating their bid'ahs. If it is known or it is thought most likely that they will use that money to support their bid'ahs, and they cannot be stopped from doing so, and they will not spend it on permissible things that they need, then they should not be given any of this money, because that entails

helping them in their sin. 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. And fear Allaah. Verily, Allaah is Severe in punishment”

[al-Maa'idah 5:2]

And Allaah is the Source of strength and the Guide to the Straight Path.