43101 - The difference between ongoing charity (sadaqah jaariyah) and other kinds of charity

the question

Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allaah and his blessings. May Allaah reward you with good on behalf of Islam and the Muslims. Is there any difference between charity and ongoing charity? If there is a difference, we would like to know some examples of charity and some examples of ongoing charity. If an ongoing charity is destroyed – such as if a man builds a mosque then this mosque is destroyed – will he have the reward of that mosque until the Day of Resurrection? May Allaah reward you with good.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Ongoing charity is the waqf (“Islamic endowment”) which may take many forms. The definition of a waqf is that the origin is “frozen” and the fruits are donated for the sake of Allaah, as was narrated by al-Bukhaari (2737) and Muslim (1633) from Ibn ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him), that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allaah be pleased with him) was given a share of land at Khaybar. He came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and asked him what he should do with it. He said: “O Messenger of Allaah, I have been given a share of land at Khaybar and I have never been given any wealth that is more precious to me than it. What do you command me to do with it?” He said: “If you wish, you can ‘freeze’ it and give it in charity.” So ‘Umar gave it in charity and stipulated that it was not to be sold, given as a gift or inherited, and he gave it in charity to the poor, relatives and slaves, for the sake of Allaah and for wayfarers and guests; there was no sin on the one appointed to look after it if he ate from it on a reasonable basis, and fed others without storing anything for the future.”

Ibn Maajah (242) narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: “The good deeds that will reach a believer after his death are: knowledge which he learned and then spread; a righteous son whom he leaves

behind; a copy of the Qur'aan that he leaves as a legacy; a mosque that he built; a house that he built for wayfarers; a canal that he dug; or charity that he gave during his lifetime when he was in good health. These deeds will reach him after his death." This hadeeth hwas classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh Ibn Maajah.

Ongoing charity may mean building a mosque, buying Mushafs (copies of the Qur'aan) to be placed in the mosque, or designating a house or a place as a waqf so that its income is spent on the poor, orphans, relatives, seekers of knowledge or others as stipulated by the one who establishes the waqf, or donating money to build a charitable hospital, and so on.

With regard to charity that is not ongoing, this is charity in which the thing given is not "frozen", rather it is given to the poor to become his property and be made use of however he wishes, such as giving him money, food, clothing, medicine or furniture.

If a person establishes a mosque as a waqf, then it is destroyed or falls down, it is permissible to sell part of it in order to renovate the rest. If it is not possible to make use of any part of it, then the whole thing may be sold and the money donated to another waqf. Ibn Qudaamah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "If a waqf is destroyed and nothing is left of it, it may be sold and the money used to buy something to be given back to the people in charge of the waqf, and it should be made a waqf like the first one was. The same applies to a horse kept for jihad, if it is no longer fit for fighting, it should be sold and the money used to buy another one that is fit for jihad. What we conclude from this is that if a waqf is destroyed and is no longer of any use, such as a house that collapses or land that is ruined and becomes dead and no longer fit for cultivation, or a mosque from which the people move away, and is now in a place where people do not pray, or it becomes too small for the people and cannot accommodate them all, or it falls into disrepair, and it cannot be maintained except by selling part of it, then it is permissible to sell part of it in order to take care of the maintenance of the rest of it. If it is not possible to use any part of it, then the whole thing may be sold. Ahmad said, according to a report narrated by Abu Dawood: if there are two pieces of wood in the mosque which are of some value, it is permissible to sell them and spend the money raised on the mosque. According to a report narrated by Saalih: the mosque may

be removed to another location if there is the fear of it being robbed or if the location is in a filthy area. Al-Qaadi said: i.e., if that prevents people from praying there. And he stated that it is permissible to sell its courtyard, according to a report narrated by ‘Abd-Allaah. The imam should give testimony to that effect (i.e., that these changes are necessary)

From al-Mughni, 5/368.

So long as the waqf is still in existence, the reward for its founder will be ongoing; the same is also true if the original waqf is sold and the money put into a new waqf. Whoever builds a mosque will have the reward promised for that. This is what is narrated in the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “Whoever builds a mosque for the sake of Allaah, even if it is like the nest of a sand grouse, Allaah will build for him a house in Paradise.” The hadeeth gives an example of building the smallest thing possible. Narrated by Ahmad, 2157; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami’. And Allaah knows best .