

Surah 2. Al-Baqara

Asad: It is not for thee [O Prophet] to make people follow the right path,²⁶⁰ since it is God [alone] who guides whom He wills. And whatever good you may spend on others is for your own good, provided that you spend only out of a longing for God's countenance: for, whatever good you may spend will be repaid unto you in full, and you shall not be wronged.

Malik: O Prophet, you are not responsible for their guidance, it is Allah Who guides whom He pleases. Whatever wealth you spend in charity, it is to your own advantage; provided you give to seek the pleasure of Allah. Whatever wealth you spend for the sake of Allah, will be paid back to you in full, and you will not be wronged.

Mustafa Khattab:

You are not responsible for people's guidance ?O Prophet?—it is Allah Who guides whoever He wills. Whatever you ?believers? spend in charity, it is for your own good—as long as you do so seeking the pleasure of Allah.¹ Whatever you donate will be paid back to you in full, and you will not be wronged.

Pickthall: The guiding of them is not thy duty (O Muhammad), but Allah guideth whom He will. And whatsoever good thing ye spend, it is for yourselves, when ye spend not save in search of Allah's countenance; and whatsoever good thing ye spend, it will be repaid to you in full, and ye will not be wronged.

Yusuf Ali: It is not required of thee (O Apostles) to set them on the right path but Allah sets on the right path whom He pleaseth. Whatever of good ye give benefits your own souls and ye shall only do so seeking the "Face" of Allah. Whatever good ye give, shall be rendered back to you and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly.^{320 321}

Transliteration: Laysa AAalayka hudahum walakinna Allaha yahdee man yashao wama tunfiqoo min khayrin falianfusikum wama tunfiqoona illa ibtighaa wajhi Allahi wama tunfiqoo min khayrin yuwaffa ilaykum waantum la tu~~h~~lamoona

Author Comments

260 - Lit., "their guidance is not upon thee" - i.e., "thou art responsible only for conveying God's message to them, and not for their reaction to it": the people referred to being the needy spoken of in the preceding verses. It appears that in the early days after his migration to Medina, the Prophet - faced by the great poverty prevalent among his own community - advised his Companions that "charity should be bestowed only on the followers of Islam" - a view that was immediately corrected by the revelation of the above verse (a number of Traditions to this effect are quoted by Tabari, Razi and Ibn Kathir, as well as in Manar III, 82 f.). According to several other Traditions (recorded, among others, by Nasa'i and Abu Da'ud and quoted by all the classical commentators), the Prophet thereupon explicitly enjoined upon his followers to disburse charities upon all who needed them, irrespective of the faith of the person concerned. Consequently, there is full agreement among all the commentators that the above verse of the Qur'an - although expressed in the singular and, on the face of it, addressed to the Prophet - lays down an injunction binding upon all Muslims. Razi, in particular, draws from it the additional conclusion that charity - or the threat to withhold it - must never become a means of attracting unbelievers to Islam: for, in order to be valid, faith must be an

outcome of inner conviction and free choice. This is in consonance with verse {256} of this surah: "There shall be no coercion in matters of faith."

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lit., seeking the Face of Allah.

320 - In connection with charity this means that we must relieve those really in need, whether they are good or bad, on the right path or not, Muslims or otherwise. It is not for us to judge in these matters. God will give light according to His wisdom. Incidentally it adds a further meaning to the command, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (ii 256). For compulsion may not only be by force, but by economic necessity. In matters of religion we must not even compel by a bribe of charity. The chief motive in charity should be God's pleasure and our own spiritual good. This was addressed in the first instance to Mustafa in Medina, but it is of universal application.

321 - See note to ii 112. Wajh means literally: face, countenance; hence, favour, glory, Self, Presence.

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