



WITH THE NAME OF GOD, ALL-MERCIFUL, MOST MERCIFUL

## WHO ARE THE *MU'ALLAFATU QULUBUHUM* (THOSE WHO ARE GIVEN ALMS TO BRING THEIR HEARTS NEAR) ?

Allah (God) says in the Qur'an:

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ  
وَالْغُرَمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ<sup>ط</sup> قَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ<sup>ق</sup> وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

*Truly, the [compulsory] alms are only for: the poor; the needy;  
those who work upon them (in alms-collection);  
those whose hearts are brought near;  
those whose necks are under the yoke;  
those who have taken on a major debt;  
in the path of God; and the child of the path [i.e. the traveller]:  
an obligation from God: for God is Knowing, Wise.*

(*Surah al-Tawbah, Repentance, 9:60 Hafs*)

### TAFSIR TABARI ON THIS VERSE (SUMMARISED)

Imam Tabari (224-310 H / 839-923 CE) said:

As for “those whose hearts are brought near”: they were a group of people who were brought closer to Islam (through the incentive of being given wealth), who could not be (openly) supported. The alms benefited themselves and their close families. Such people were: Abu Sufyan bin Harb, ‘Uyaynah bin Badr, Aqra’ bin Habis and similar heads of tribes.

**Similar to what we have said, has been said by the People of Interpretation.**

**Mention of those who said that:** Ibn ‘Abbas, Yahya bin Abi Kathir, Zuhri, Mujahid, Hasan [Basri] and Qatadah. Yahya bin Abi Kathir said that such heads of tribes were given a hundred she-camels<sup>1</sup> each by the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace; a few others were given fifty each. Zuhri added that this phrase includes Jews and Christians who submit to God (via Islam), even if they are rich.

***The people of knowledge differed about whether or not this category exists today, and whether anyone today may be given charity to bring them closer to Islam?***

<sup>1</sup> A hundred camels represents a lot of wealth: it is the same as the *diyyah* (blood-money) for murder. In today's financial terms, it would approximate up to a hundred thousand US dollars or UK pounds, or even more. (AQS)

**Some of them said: The category of “those whose hearts are brought together” is invalid today: there is no share in the compulsory alms except for those in need, those in the path of God and those who work upon them (in alms-collection).**

**Mention of those who said that:** Hasan [Basri], ‘Amir [bin Sharahil al-Sha’bi] and ‘Umar bin al-Khattab.

When ‘Uyaynah bin Hisn came to [Caliph] ‘Umar bin al-Khattab [seeking to be given alms], ‘Umar said, **“The Truth (has come) from your Lord: so whoever wishes to, may have faith; and whoever wishes to, may deny!”** [Surah al-Kahf, The Cave, 18:29 Hafs] That is, there is no bringing near today.

‘Amir [bin Sharahil al-Sha’bi] said: Those whose hearts were brought near, were only during the time of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace: when Abu Bakr, may God Exalted’s Mercy be upon him, came to power, incentives stopped.

**Others said: “Those whose hearts are brought near” exist in every age, and they have a right to some alms.**

**Mention of those who said that:** Abu Ja’far [i.e. Imam Muhammad bin ‘Ali al-Baqir].

Abu Ja’far [i.e. Imam Tabari, who had his own, independent *Madhhab*] said:

*The correct saying from amongst those, in my view, is that God has made alms to serve two purposes. One of them is to fill any gaps (of need) amongst the Muslims. The other is to aid and strengthen Islam. Whatever charity is to aid Islam and strengthen its means, this is given to both rich and poor. This is because it is not given to a person due to his need for it, but is given to him in order to aid the religion. This is just like what is given to a person for the sake of sacred war (Jihad) in the way of God, for that is given to him whether he is rich or poor, and not to fill his gap (of need). Similar are those whose hearts are brought near: they are given that charity even if they are rich: such giving to them seeks to benefit the matter of Islam and seeks to strengthen and fortify it.*

*The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, gave to whomever amongst those whose hearts were to be brought near, after God opened the victories for him: Islam spread and its people increased in honour. Thus, there is no proof in the argument of the one who says that “Today, no-one is to be brought near to Islam (via alms), because the people of Islam, by their great number, are prevented from being reached by anyone who wishes to give them alms.” The Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, gave to those whom he gave whilst they were in the condition that has been described.*

## TAFSIR IBN KATHIR ON THIS VERSE (SUMMARISED)

**Imam Ibn Kathir (700-774 H / 1300-1373 CE) said:**

As for “those whose hearts are brought near”:

[1] Some were those who were given (alms) that they may submit (in Islam).

An example is that the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, gave to Safwan bin Umayyah out of the spoils (of war) at Hunayn, a battle that the latter had witnessed as a polytheist. Imam Ahmad, Muslim and Tirmidhi narrated that Safwan bin Umayyah said, “The Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, gave me (wealth) on the Day of Hunayn whilst he was the most hated of people to me, but he continued giving me (wealth) until he became the most beloved of people to me.”

[2] Some were given (alms) in order that they improve their Islam (having already submitted) and for their hearts to become firm.

An example is that he distributed (wealth), on the Day of Hunayn, to a group of tribal chiefs and nobles amongst the released captives: a hundred camels each. He said, “Truly, I give to a man whilst another is more beloved to me, fearing that God will upend him (the former) on his face in the Fire of Jahannam.”

In the two *Sahih*s (of Bukhari and Muslim), there is on the authority of Abu Sa’id that ‘Ali sent a small nugget of gold, (encased) in its rock, to the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace, from Yemen: he divided it amongst four people: Aqra’ bin Habis, ‘Uyaynah bin Badr, ‘Alqamah bin ‘Ulathah and Zayd al-Khayr, and said, “I bring them near.”

[3] Some were given (wealth) because of the hope that their peers would submit (in Islam).

[4] Some were given (wealth) in order to elicit alms from those around them, or

[5] To ward off harm from the border lands around the territory of the Muslims.

The place for detailed explanation of this is the books of jurisprudential rulings (*furu’*).

And God knows best.

***Can alms be given to those being brought closer to Islam, after the (time of) the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace ?***

There is difference of opinion in this matter.

It is narrated from ‘Umar, ‘Amir al-Sha’bi and a group (of authorities) that they are not to be given (alms) after his time, because God has honoured Islam and its people, established them firmly in the land and made the necks of others subservient to them.

Others said: Rather, they are to be given (alms) because he, Blessings and Peace be upon him, gave to such people after the Opening of Mecca [i.e. when Islam had already become established] and the Breaking of (the Tribe of) Hawazin [at Hunayn]: this was a situation where alms might be needed, so these could be diverted to them.

## IMAM ABU BAKR AL-JASSAS (HANAFAI) & QADI ABU BAKR IBN AL-‘ARABI (MALIKI)<sup>2</sup>

Imam Abu Bakr al-Jassas (305-370 H / 917-981 CE) said in his *Ahkam al-Qur’an (Rulings of the Qur’an)*, whilst discussing the premise that alms are essentially for the poor:

If it is said that “those whose hearts were brought near” would receive alms without being poor, it would be said in reply: they would not receive it as alms; rather, alms would be collected for the poor, but some of it would be given to those whose hearts are brought near, in order to repel their harm against the poor amongst the Muslims, and that the former might submit in Islam, thus strengthening the poor amongst the Muslims. Thus, they would not receive it as alms; rather, alms were collected and used for the benefit (*masalih*) of the Muslims. This is because wealth given for the poor may be diverted for their benefit (*masalih*) if the Imam [i.e. the Caliph] rules over them and decides about matters beneficial to them (*masalih*).

[Summarised] Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-‘Arabi (468-543 H / 1076-1148 CE) said in his *Ahkam al-Qur’an (Rulings of the Qur’an)*:

THE NINTH ISSUE [regarding this verse of the Qur’an]

About “those whose hearts are brought near,” there are four views:

- 1) They were given alms because of the weakness of their certainty, until this became strong. Those who said that they were Muslims, cited the examples of Abu Sufyan bin Harb, Aqra’ bin Habis and ‘Abbas bin Mirdas. Those who said that they were non-Muslims, cited the example of ‘Amir bin Tufail. Those who said that they were polytheists with an inclination towards Islam, cited the example of Safwan bin Umayyah.
- 2) Yahya bin Abi Kathir named them as leaders of the following [ten] tribes or clans: Banu Umayyah, Banu Jumah, Banu ‘Amir, Banu Asad, Banu Hashim, Banu Fazarah, Banu Tamim, Banu Nasr, Banu Sulaym and Thaqif.
- 3) Ibn Wahb narrated from Malik that he said: Safwan bin Umayyah, Hakim bin Hizam, Aqra’ bin Habis, ‘Uyaynah bin Badr, Suhayl bin ‘Amr and Abu Sufyan were amongst “those whose hearts were brought near,” and that on the day [of Hunayn] when Safwan was given alms, he was a polytheist.

Asbagh said, on the authority of Ibn al-Qasim: “Those whose hearts were brought near” were Safwan bin Umayyah and certain men of Quraysh.

- 4) The Shaykh Abu Ishaq named them to be forty men of the Quraysh and other tribes, including leaders and others.

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<sup>2</sup> The Hanafi and Maliki schools are complementary, in the sense that they represent the schools of Reason (*Ahl al-Ra’y*) and Tradition (*Ahl al-Hadith*) respectively. A holistic approach to the Sunnah combines these complementary approaches, as per Imam Shatibi (cf. Al-Shanqiti, *On Madhhabs & Taqlid*, AQS, 1445/2023)

## THE TENTH ISSUE

There has been a difference of opinion as to whether [the category of] “those whose hearts are brought near” persisted.

Some of them said: They [i.e. this category of people] disappeared. This view was expressed by a group (of authorities), and was held by Malik.

Some said: They remain, because the Imam [i.e. the Caliph] may need to bring people near to Islam. [Caliph] ‘Umar discontinued them [i.e. this category of people] because of what he saw of the might of the religion.

My view is that if Islam is strong, this category disappears; but if such people are needed, they are given their share, just as the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, used to give the share. For it is narrated in the *Sahih* (authentic hadiths): **“Islam began as a stranger, and will return as a stranger, as it began.”** [*Sahih Muslim*]

## THE ELEVENTH ISSUE

If we say that this category of people has disappeared, then their share returns to all the (other) categories, or to whichever (category or categories) the Imam decides, according to the previous explanation regarding the root of the disagreement.

Zuhri said: Half of their share is to be given to those who frequent the mosques. There is no evidence for this view. The first view (mentioned above) is more correct.