Spending Money from The Home Charity Box for Different Causes

Darulifta Ahlesunnat (Dawateislami)

(Translated Fatwa)

Question

What do the noble scholars and jurists of Islamic law say about the following: If some money is put into the home charity box but the money is still at home, can this money be used for other rewardable causes. For example, can it be used for decorations at Jāmiʿa-Tul-Madīnah, or something similar?

Answer

بِسْمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

اَلْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِکِ الْوَھَّابِ اَللّٰھُمَّ ھِدَایَۃَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

When money is put into a home charity box, it does not leave the ownership of its original owner. Instead, this is essentially an intention to give that money in charity. Therefore, it is permissible to spend this money in other rewardable causes, such as decorating the Jāmiʿa-Tul-Madīnah; there is no issue in this. However, if one is financially capable then it is better to keep the money of the home charity box for the cause for which it was collected and use additional money for other rewardable causes. This way, the original intention will remain and one will be able to fulfill it. However, if one did not do so and spent that money for another rewardable cause, there is no sin for this either.

Simply putting money in the home charity boxes does not constitute it as sadaqah, just as setting aside money for zakāh does not constitute paying zakāh. Thus, it is stated in *Al-Durr al-Mukhtār Maʿa Radd al-Muḥtār*:

(ولا یخرج عن العھدۃ بالعزل بل بالأداء للفقراء) فلو ضاعت لا تسقط عنہ الزکاۃ ولو مات کانت میراثا عنہ

Translation: One will not become freed from the responsibility merely by setting aside the money (for zakāh); rather one will only become freed of the responsibility by paying the money to a (sharʿī) faqīr. Hence, if the money is lost, the zakāh will not be remitted and if one passes away, that money will become inheritance. (Al-Durr al-Mukhtār Maʿa Radd al-Muḥtār, Vol. 03, Book of Zakāh, p. 225, Publ. Dār al-Maʿrifah, Beirut)

It is stated in *al-Nahr al-Fāʾiq*:

لا یخرج بالعزل عن العھدۃ بل لا بد من التصدق بہ حتی لو ضاعت لم تسقط عنہ کذا فی الخانیۃ

Translation: One will not become freed from the responsibility by setting aside the money. Instead, it is necessary to hand over the money. Even so, if the money is lost, the zakāh will not be remitted. It is similarly mentioned in *al-Khāniyah*. (Al-Nahr al-Fāʾiq, Vol. 01, p. 419, Publ. Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah, Beirut)

The money put into a home charity box can be spent in other rewardable causes. Thus, Aʿlā Ḥazrat, Imām Aḥmad Razā Khān رحمۃ اللہ تعالی علیہ was asked a question,

the summary of which is that a person allocated a certain amount from his business profit as tabarruk for Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir al-Jīlānī رحمة الله تعالى عليه. The money is now present, but he did not specify the cause for which he would spend the money. So, the question is, can this money be used for renovations to the masjid and other rewardable causes?
He رحمة الله تعالى عليه answered:

نیت کرنے والوں کو مولی تعالی جزائے خیر دے۔ بہت محمود (اچھی) نیت ہے اور ہر دینی مصرف میں اسے صرف کرسکتے ہیں۔ مسجد ویران کی آبادی نہایت اہم کام ہے اس میں صرف کرنا مقدم ہے۔

Translation: May Allāh reward the one who made this intention. This intention is commendable, and he can use the money for every religious cause. Reviving a rundown masjid is an important task, and spending money for this cause takes precedence. (Fatāwā Razawiyah, Vol. 13, p. 582, Publ. Razā Foundation, Lahore)
It is better to use the money from the charity box in the cause for which it was collected, and use other money for other rewardable causes. This way it will be possible to fulfill the previous intention as well. Aʿlā Ḥazrat, Imām Aḥmad Razā Khān رحمة الله تعالى عليه was asked in *Fatāwā Razawiyah* that a person's cow gave birth to a female calf, and he said that they would raise the calf and give it to the young girl. When the calf became one year old and, seeing how beautiful and appealing it had become, he spontaneously said, "We will offer it as a vow to Allāh." He did not remember that he had intended to give it to the young girl. So, has the vow been made or not?
Aʿlā Ḥazrat رحمة الله تعالى عليه stated:

جو نیت اللہ عزوجل کے لئے (ہو) اس کا پورا کرنا ہی چاہیئے۔

Translation: An intention which is made for Allāh Almighty should most certainly be fulfilled. (Fatāwā Razawiyah, Vol. 13, p. 594, Publ. Razā Foundation, Lahore)
Note: Keep in mind that the above-mentioned ruling applies when all the money in the home charity box belongs to the person himself. But if others had also put money inside the box, whether they were other household members or visiting guests, then the money must be used as per their intention, otherwise permission must be obtained from the contributors (before using the money for any other cause).

وَاللّٰہُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُوْلُہ اَعْلَم صَلَّی اللّٰہُ تَعَالٰی عَلَیْہِ وَاٰلِہٖ وَسَلَّم

(Allah Almighty knows best and His Messenger صَلَّی اللّٰہُ عَلَیْہِ وَاٰلِہٖ وَسَلَّم knows best.)

Answered By: Mufti Muhammad Qasim Attari
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feedback@daruliftaahlesunnat.net