

396671 - Does the verse {Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself} [al-Jaathiyah 45:15] means that it is not allowed to give the reward for righteous deeds to someone else?

the question

A while ago I read on several websites that it is permissible for a person to give the reward of his good deed to one who has died, and that the scholars differed concerning the permissibility of giving the reward of some physical good deeds, such as prayer to someone else, but they agreed that it is permissible to give the reward of other good deeds, such as acts of charity and supplication, to someone else. My question is: how can we reconcile between the permissibility of giving the reward of good deeds to someone else with the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): {Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself} [al-Jaathiyah 45:15]? Also, for example, Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): {If you do good, you do good for yourselves} [al-Isra' 17:7]. Doesn't the meaning of these verses indicate that the reward for a person's good deed is for him only, and he cannot give the reward of his good deeds to someone else? Please note that I have looked on many websites and I cannot find an answer to my question; the only verse that the scholars quote as an answer is (interpretation of the meaning): {And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives} [an-Najm 53:9], but it does not seem to be like the verses that I quoted in terms of its meaning. Please advise me.

Detailed answer

Firstly:

On our website we have previously stated that in principle it is valid to give the reward of righteous deeds to someone else, although there is a difference of scholarly opinion with regard to the type of righteous deeds the reward of which may reach others. This has been discussed previously in the answers to questions no. [42384](#) and [46698](#) .

Secondly:

With regard to what is mentioned in the verses in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Whoever does a good deed – it is for himself; and whoever does evil – it is against the self. Then to your Lord you will be returned} [al-Jaathiyah 45:15]

{If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, [you do it] to yourselves} [al-Isra' 17:7],

There is nothing in these and similar verses to indicate that it is not valid to give the reward of deeds to others; rather they have nothing to do with the fiqhi issue under discussion.

The reason for that is twofold:

1.. These verses explain that if a person accepts the call of the Messengers (peace be upon them), and he believes and does righteous deeds, the benefit of that will be his alone and no one else will benefit from it. So his accepting the message of the Messengers does not increase the dominion of Allah at all, or increase the virtue of the Messengers, and it will not benefit or affect anyone except himself. Rather all of that, the good and the bad, will affect him only. This is referred to in the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And We had certainly given Luqman wisdom [and said], “Be grateful to Allah.” And whoever is grateful is grateful for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever denies [His favor] – then indeed, Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy} [Luqmaan 31:12].

What Allah, may He be exalted, intended through the call of the Messengers was to benefit people themselves. So whoever responds to the call and obeys Allah will receive his reward in full, and will not be wronged in the slightest.

This was also explained in verses such as the following (interpretation of the meaning):

{Whoever does righteousness – it is for his [own] soul; and whoever does evil [does so] against it. And your Lord is not ever unjust to [His] servants} [Fussilat 41:46].

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The words {Whoever does righteousness – it is for his [own] soul} refer to a condition and the outcome thereof, as do the words {and whoever does evil [does so] against it}.

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has no need of the obedience of people, so whoever obeys Him, the reward is for him, and whoever does evil, the punishment will befall him. {And your Lord is not ever unjust to [His] servants}. Allah denies that He ever commits injustice, small or great. The evidence for that is the verse (interpretation of the meaning): { Indeed, Allah does not wrong the people at all} [Yoonus 10:44]." (*Tafseer al-Qurtubi* 18/432).

Thirdly:

With regard to the issue of whether the benefit of good deeds may reach someone else or not, these verses do not say anything about that, but it is stated in other texts, which explain that the believer may benefit someone else through some of his good deeds, such as supplication, calling them to Islam, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. And he may harm others by some of his deeds, such as the one who strives to spread misguidance and confusion (fitnah).

The one who responds to the call of the righteous is the one who will receive his reward in full, but in addition to that he will benefit the caller by his action, who will receive a reward similar to his.

This is seen in the hadith of Abu Hurayrah, according to which the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever calls people to guidance will have a reward like that of those who follow him, without that detracting from their rewards in the slightest..." Narrated by Muslim (2674).

And Abu Mas'ood al-Ansaari said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "The one who tells others about a good deed will have a reward like that of the one who does it." Narrated by Muslim (1893).

2.. Benefiting someone else through some righteous deeds, such as supplication, Hajj and so on, is in itself a righteous deed, so it is included in the general meaning of the verses that I have referred to, such as the verse (interpretation of the meaning): {Whoever does a good deed – it is for himself} [al-Jaathiyah 45:15].

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Whoever does good to people does good to himself, as it was narrated from one of the early generations that he said: Whatever good I do to someone and whatever bad I do to someone, I am only doing good to myself and doing bad to myself. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning)

{If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, [you do it] to yourselves} [al-Isra' 17:7]

{Whoever does a good deed – it is for himself; and whoever does evil – it is against the self} [al-Jaathiyah 45:15]." (*Majmoo' al-Fataawa* 30/364-365).

And Allah knows best.