

Legal Rulings Concerning the Rules of Zakaatul-Fitr
By The Esteemed Father, al-Allamah Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullaah ibn Baaz
(May Allaah, the Most High, Have Mercy upon him and Forgive him)

Whoever Does Not Have Any Poor People In His Area Must Go Elsewhere And Search

Question: What should a person do if he does not find anyone around him - who is entitled to receive *Zakaatul-Fitr* - to give it to? And what is the ruling concerning someone who does not distribute it until *after* the *Eid* Prayer?

Answer: In the Name of Allaah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. The Praise belongs to Allaah, and may the Praise of Allaah (in the Highest Assembly of the Angels) and Safety and Security be upon the Messenger of Allaah, his family, his companions, and whoever follows his guidance. To proceed:

Zakaatul-Fitr is an duty which Allaah, the Mighty, the Majestic, has made obligatory – from words of His Messenger Muhammad (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) – upon the men and women, the young and old, as well as the free and the slave. The Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) **ordered** that it be *distributed* (to those entitled to it) **before** the people go out for the *Eid* Prayer.

So, whoever does not find any poor people around him is required to present (the *Zakaatul-Fitr*) to other poor people in the neighboring cities; and he must *hasten* to *distribute* it **before** the *Eid* Prayer; and he has no right to **delay** it until after the *Eid* Prayer, since this is *contrary* to the *command* of the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam).

The Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) **ordered** that the *Zakaatul-Fitr* be *distributed* (to the poor) **before** the people go out to the (Eid) Prayer. He (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) said: "...whoever has distributed it **before** the (Eid) *Salaat*, it will be considered as *Zakaat Maq-boo-lah* (an acceptable charity, for the Eid); and whoever distributes it **after** the (Eid) *Salaat*, it will be considered as one of the (general) charities."

Hence, that which is obligatory upon you – O questioner – is to give care to this matter, and to distribute (the *Zakaatul-Fitr*) **before** the *Eid* Prayer, even if it is **a day or two or three days before the Eid**. There is no harm (in doing so) on the twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth or thirtieth day (of the fast of Ramadaan).

Ibn Umar (RadiyAllaahu an-huma) used to distribute (the *Zakaatul-Fitr*) *two days before* the *Eid*, and similar [was the practice of] the **Sahaabah** (companions) (RadiyAllaahu an-hum). Perhaps he - Ibn Umar (RadiyAllaahu an-huma) - distributed it **three days before the Eid**. What this means is that there is no harm in doing this (i.e. advancing the distribution of *Zakaatul-Fitr* two or three days before the Eid).

The distribution starts from the **twenty-eighth day** and continues up until the *Eid* Prayer. So, you have **no right to delay it** until *after* the (Eid) Prayer. **And if there are no poor people in your area, then seek out the poor in another area, even by making a journey.**

It is legislated that Zakaatul-Fitr Be Distributed Among the Poor People In (Your) Land

Question: As far as the (Zakaat) *al-Fitr* – Is it to be distributed to the poor people of our land, or to other than them? And if we are to travel three days before the Eid, what are we to do about the (Zakaat) *al-Fitr*?

Answer: The *Sunnah* is to distribute the *Zakaatul-Fitr* among the **poor people of (that particular) land**, on the **morning** of the day of *Eid*, **before the (Eid) Prayer**. It is (also) *permissible* to distribute it *one or two days before that*, starting from the **twenty-eighth day** (of Ramadaan).

And if the person who is obligated pay *Zakaatul-Fitr* travels two days or more before the Eid, then he should distribute (the *Zakaatul-Fitr*) in the **Islamic country** that he is traveling to; and if it is a non-Muslim country (that he is traveling to), **he must search for some poor Muslims and give it to them.**

If he travels after the time when it is permissible to distribute (the *Zakaatul-Fitr*), then what is legislated for him is to distribute (the *Zakaatul-Fitr*) *among the poor people of his country*. This is because the **purpose** and **objective** of *Zakaatul-Fitr* is to comfort and support the poor people, to be kind to them, and to free them of any need to beg from others during the days of the *Eid*.

Distribution of Zakaatul-Fitr Must Not Be Delayed To Search For A Poor Person

Question: Are both **Zakaatul-Amwaal** (the obligatory charity of ones' *wealth*) and **Zakaatul-Abdaan** (literally, the charity on ones' *body*, i.e. *Zakaatul-Fitr*) equal in reference to [the permissibility of] **delaying** the *Zakaat* for the *purpose of searching* for a person who is known to be poor?

Answer: No, these two (types of charity) are not equal (in this matter). Rather, it is **obligatory** to **advance** the distribution of *Zakaatul-Fitr* **before** the *Eid* Prayer – as the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) commanded it to be done; and there is nothing to prevent one from distributing it **a day or two or three before the Eid**. However, it must *not* be **delayed** until *after* the *Eid*.

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