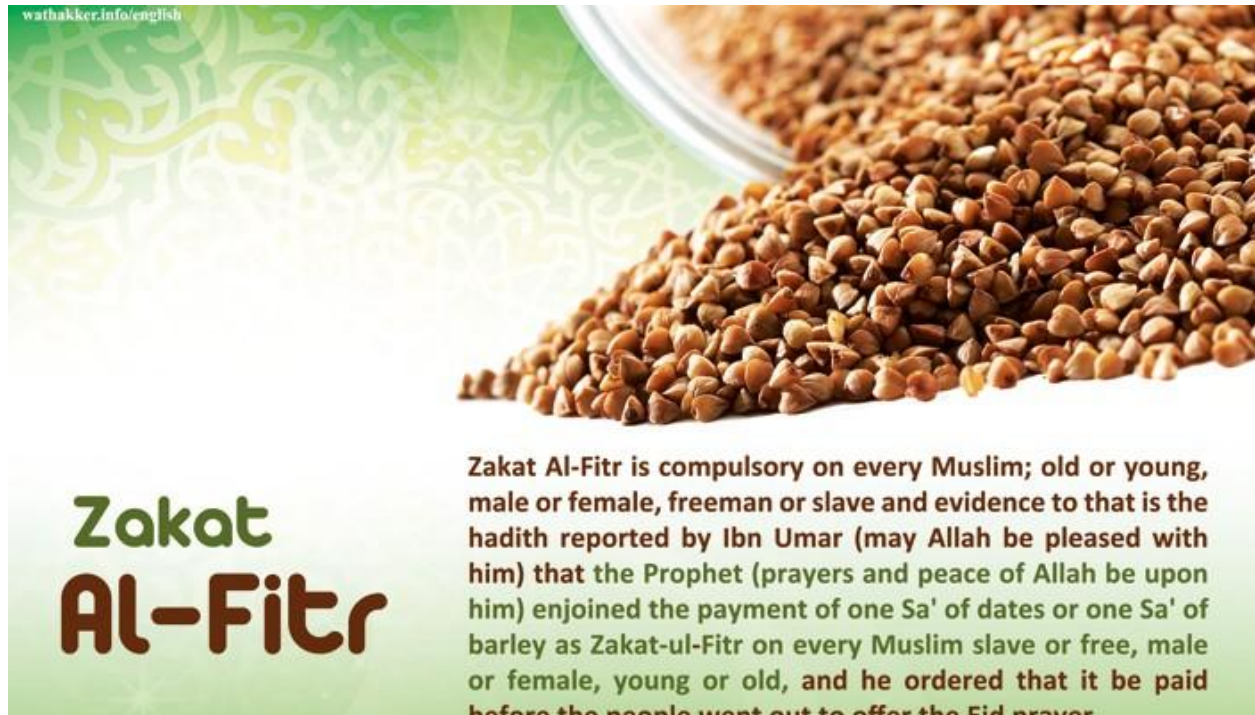


Legal Rulings Concerning the Rules of Zakaatul-Fitr

By The Esteemed Father, al-Allaamah 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 (RadiyahAllaahu an-huma) used to distribute (the Zakaatul-Fitr) two days before the Eid, and similar [was the practice of] the Sahaabah (companions) (RadiyahAllaahu an-hum). Perhaps he - Ibn Umar (RadiyahAllaahu 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.

Majmoo'ah Fataawaa wa Maqaalaat Mutanawwi'ah,

by The Esteemed Shaykh, Imaam Ibn Baaz, Vol. 14, pgs. 198-218

[Translation: Abu Muhammad Abdur Rauf Shakir, 25th Ramadan 1434 AH (August 3 2013 CE)]