

275376 - Giving zakat al-fitr in the form of meat when people in the city have enough grains

the question

In Syria, charities distribute all basic foodstuffs for free to all those who need them, so nobody needs zakat al-fitr in the form of staple food measured by volume, so what should we do? Can we give other types of food that are not measured by volume, such as meat? Or is the fitrah [zakat al-fitr] waived in our case? Or should we send it to another country? Or what? Please note that with regard to the regions in Syria that the charities cannot reach, it is very difficult to send money or food to them.

Detailed answer

Firstly:

Zakaat al-fitr must be given in the form of what people eat as their staple food, because of the report narrated by al-Bukhaari (1510) from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: At the time of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), we used to give on the day of Eid al-Fitr a saa' of foodstuff. Abu Sa'eed said: Our food was barley, raisins, dried yogurt and dates.

It is also permissible to give it in the form of rice, flour and other staple foods.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said in I'laam al-Muwaqqi'een (3/12):

These were the usual staple foods in Madinah.

If the people in a city or place have a different staple food, then they must be given a saa' of their staple food, such as those whose staple food is wheat, rice, figs or other grains.

If their staple food is not grains, such as milk, meat or fish, then they should give their zakat al-fitr in the form of their staple food, no matter what it is. This is the view of the majority of scholars, and it is the correct view; no other view is acceptable, because the purpose

behind it is to meet the needs of the poor on the day of Eid and to console them by giving them the same type of staple food as that used by people in their country.

Based on that, it is acceptable to give flour, even though there is no saheeh hadith that mentions it. End quote.

Secondly:

It is permissible to give a poor person more than one fitrah (fitrah = the zakaat al-fitr given by one person). Although you say that no one needs staple foods in your country, that is very unlikely, because no matter what the charities give, it will not usually make a poor person independent of means.

It says in al-Mughni (3/99): It is permissible to give one person what a group needs, and to give a group what one person needs. We do not know of any difference of scholarly opinion about giving to a group what one person needs, because the giver has given his charity to deserving people, and has thus absolved his duty, just as if he had given it to one person.

As for giving to one person charity sufficient for a group, ash-Shaafa'i stated that it is obligatory to divide charity into six categories (of recipients), and give the share of each category to three people who fall into that category, as mentioned above. We have quoted the evidence for that above.

Because it is charity that is not allocated to a specific person, it is permissible to give it to one person, as in the case of voluntary charity. This is the view of Maalik, Abu Thawr, Ibn al-Mundhir and as-haab ar-ra'y. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The rate of zakaat al-fitr is one saa' from each individual, but there is no statement concerning the number of people to whom this charity may be given. Hence it is permissible to distribute one fitrah (fitrah = the zakaat al-fitr given by one person) to more than one poor person, and it is permissible to give a number of fitrahs to one poor person.

End quote from ash-Sharh al-Mumti' (15/161).

So long as a person is regarded as poor, it is permissible to give him a number of fitrahs.

Thirdly:

If there are no poor people in the city, or those who receive it do not need it and will sell it at a cheap price, then it may be sent to another city where there are people who need it, or it may be stored by the charity and distributed to the poor later on.

Shaykh Ibn Jibreen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: We collect zakat al-fitr. Our question is: is it permissible for us to store what we receive of zakat al-fitr then distribute it to the poor every month and so on, on the grounds that we are acting on behalf of the poor? Or must we give it out before we set out for Eid prayer?

He replied: You should give the poor what will suffice them on the day of Eid and the following days.

As for what is left after that, surplus to the needs of the poor on that day, it is permissible for you to keep it until the poor need it again, so that you can meet their needs.

If you distribute it on the day of Eid, or one or two days before that, in principle this is how it should be done. But if you come to know that the poor will sell it for half or one quarter of the normal price, then it is better to give it to someone else, or send it to another place where there are poor people, or store it then distribute it every month and the like, according to what you think best. And Allah is the source of strength. And Allah knows best.

End quote from the Shaykh's website:

<https://www.ibn-jebreen.com/fatwa/vmasal-3264-.html>

Fourthly:

Giving zakat al-fitr in the form of meat is not permissible, except for those whose staple food is meat, such as the people of northern regions.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said in ash-Sharh al-Mumti' (6/182): But if the staple food of the people is not grain or fruit – rather it is meat, for example, such as those who live in the Arctic – whose staple food is usually meat – then the correct view is that it is acceptable for them to give that [as zakat al-fitr]. End quote.

He (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Some of the Bedouin give zakat al-fitr in the form of meat. Is that permissible?

He replied: That is not valid, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) enjoined it as one saa' of foodstuff [which is measured by volume], and meat is measured by weight, not volume. The Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) enjoined giving a saa' of foodstuff. Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) enjoined zakaat al-fitr, a saa' of dates or a saa' of barley. Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) said: At the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), we used to give it as one saa' of foodstuff, and our food was dates, barley, raisins and dried yogurt.

Hence the most correct scholarly view is that zakaat al-fitr is not valid in the form of cash, clothing, or furnishings. The view of those scholars who say that it may be given in the form of cash carries no weight, because so long as there is a text from the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), no one else's view counts, and no rational argument may be used to undermine what the Lawgiver enjoined. Undoubtedly, zakaat al-fitr is only acceptable in the form of foodstuff, and whatever food is the staple food of a country is acceptable.

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa (18/280).

See also the answers to questions no. [99327](#) and [233593](#).

And Allah knows best.