



دفتر مقام معظم رهبری

## Qs and As re Eid al-Fitr - 4 /Jun/ 2019

### Questions and Answers regarding Precepts pertaining to Eid al-Fitr

#### Paying *Zakāt al-Fītrah* in the Form of Money rather than Goods

Q.1| In submitting *zakāt al-fītrah*,<sup>[1]</sup> are we allowed to pay money instead of such staples as wheat, barley, and rice?

A.1 Yes, it is permissible.

#### Transferring *Zakāt al-Fītrah* to Poor Persons Living outside One's Town or City

Q.2| Can we pay our *zakāt al-fītrah* to poor people living outside our town or in a different town or city?

A.1 Paying *zakāt al-fītrah* in a town or city other than the one in which one resides is permissible. However, if on Eid al-Fitr one has set aside *zakāt al-fītrah* to pay to the poor, assuming that there are poor individuals in his town to which one could offer *zakāt al-fītrah*, it is—as a matter of mandatory caution—impermissible to transfer *zakāt al-fītrah* to the poor in a different town or city.

#### Paying *Zakāt al-Fītrah* to Non-Shias

Q.3| Can we pay our *zakāt al-fītrah* to poor people that are not Shia?

A.1 So long as there are poor Twelver Shias (*al-shī'ah al-ithnā 'asharīyyah*), it is impermissible to offer *zakāt al-fītrah* to the poor who do not adhere to the Twelver Shia faith.<sup>[2]</sup>

#### Paying *Zakāt al-Fītrah* on behalf of Guests

Q.4| What is our religious duty vis-à-vis guests that spend the night preceding Eid al-Fitr at our house? Does the host pay *zakāt al-fītrah* on behalf of such guests?

A.1 The host is not responsible for the *zakāt al-fītrah* of guests who spend the night preceding Eid al-Fitr at his house.

#### The *Zakāt al-Fītrah* of a Working Woman

Q.5| If a woman helps with the family expenses because her husband is incapable of meeting the family needs, who pays *zakāt al-fītrah* for the family?

A.1 So long as a woman is considered a dependent<sup>[3]</sup> of her husband, he pays their *zakāt al-fītrah* if he is financially capable. If, however, she is not his dependent nor that of anyone else, she must pay her own *zakāt al-fītrah*.

#### The Duty of the Family of a Man Who Neglects to Pay *Zakāt al-Fītrah*

Q.6| If a man fails to pay *zakāt al-fītrah*, how does this affect his wife and children?

A.1 His wife and children have no particular obligation in this relation and thus need not pay *zakāt al-fītrah*.

#### When Submitting *Zakāt al-Fītrah* to Its Recipients Becomes Due

Q.7| When does *zakāt al-fītrah* become due?

A.1 Once the appearance of the new moon of the month of Shawwāl has been ascertained (on the night preceding Eid al-Fitr), one may set aside the amount of goods or money one must pay as *zakāt al-fītrah*. If one is planning to attend the Eid al-Fitr Prayer, one must, as a matter of mandatory caution, submit the amount due, or at least set it aside, prior to performing the prayer. If one does not plan to attend the Eid al-Fitr Prayer, one has until noontime to pay *zakāt al-fītrah* or to at least set it aside.

#### Paying *Zakāt al-Fītrah* prior to Eid al-Fitr

Q.8| Presuming there are people in another country who are more in need than those that are in the country of our residence, is it permissible to pay *zakāt al-fītrah* a few days early so that it may reach the recipients in the foreign country on time? Also, can we ask someone who lives in that country to pay *zakāt al-fītrah* to the qualified recipients on our behalf, and then reimburse him later when we meet?

A.1 It is permissible to ask someone to function as one's representative (*wakīl*) in paying *zakāt al-fītrah* to the poor on one's behalf. As to the time of submitting *zakāt al-fītrah*, it is—as a matter of mandatory caution—invalid to pay it during the month of Ramadan.<sup>[4]</sup> It is, however, permissible to grant the amount that one will have to pay as *zakāt al-fītrah* to a qualified recipient during the month of Ramadan as a loan, and then when the beginning of the month of Shawwāl has been ascertained, one can forfeit the loan as payment for *zakāt al-fītrah*.



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## Forgetting to Pay *Zakāt al-Fiṭrah*

### Q.9| What do we do if we forget to pay *zakāt al-fiṭrah*?

A.1 If you have set aside the amount due prior to noontime on Eid al-Fitr but have forgotten to pay it to the qualified recipient, you need only to submit the amount you have set aside. But if you have not even set aside the amount due, you must—as a matter of mandatory caution—pay your *zakāt al-fiṭrah* to the qualified recipient, but your intention in doing so should simply be to seek proximity to God (*qurbatan ilā allāh*), without distinguishing it as a timely action (*adā*<sup>1</sup>) or an overdue action whose time has passed (*qaḍā*<sup>2</sup>).

### Paying *Zakāt al-Fiṭrah* to One's Dependents

### Q.10| Can a father pay his *zakāt al-fiṭrah* and that of his family to his son or daughter who is a college student and in financial need?

A.1 If one's children are in financial need (*faqīr*), the parents are obligated to pay their expenses, but it is impermissible to pay *zakāt al-fiṭrah* to cover their necessary daily expenses, for which the parents are responsible. If, however, they have necessary expenses for which the parents are not responsible, such as if they have a debt or a need that is critical to their lives but that is not the parents' responsibility, parents may offer their *zakāt al-fiṭrah* to their children to be used specifically for these expenses.

[1] *Zakāt al-fiṭrah* (also referred to as *zakāt al-fitr*, *fiṭrah*, or *fiṭriyyah*) is an annual religious tax that becomes due every Eid al-Fitr. Every adult (*bāligh*, i.e., one who has reached the age of puberty) individual who is sane, conscious, and possessed of sufficient financial means (*ghanī*) is duty-bound to pay this tax for himself and for his dependents—all those whose livelihood depends on him. *Zakāt al-fiṭrah* is payable to poor Shia believers. The amount of the tax is three kilos of such common staples as rice, wheat, and barley or their monetary equivalent per person. Thus, the male breadwinner of a family of four must pay twelve kilos of the aforementioned goods or the monetary equivalent to the poor.

[2] Note that this does not mean that Shias are prohibited from giving in charity to non-Shias who are in need. Rather, this answer pertains only to the recipients of the religious tax of *zakāt al-fiṭrah*.

[3] Dependent (*ṭyāl* in Arabic, *nānkhur* in Farsi) is one who is financially dependent on another person. A man's wife and children are typically seen as his dependents in a traditional family.

[4] Note that the night preceding Eid al-Fitr is considered in Islamic liturgy as the first night of the month of Shawwāl. Generally speaking, as far as Islamic liturgy and canon is concerned, the day ends at nightfall, and so the night belongs to the following day rather than the preceding day. Thus, the first night of the month of Shawwāl, when *zakāt al-fiṭrah* becomes payable, is the night preceding Eid al-Fitr.