
In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

When and where to pay?

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1. When to pay zakat-ul-fitr?

The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Therefore, the *Sadaqah* (charity) of the person who gives before the `Eid prayer is the real *Sadaqah*, but if someone delays and gives it afterwards, his charity will be an ordinary one." (Reported by Abu Dawood and Ibn Majah.).

On the basis of the above all scholars are of the opinion that zakat-ul-fitr must be paid before Eid prayers. There is disagreement about how many days in advance of Eid it can be paid. The Prophet (PBUH) used to pay zakat-ul-fitr after fajr (predawn prayers) but before the Eid prayer. Based on this, some scholars are of the opinion that zakat-ul-fitr should be paid within a period of a few days before the Eid prayer and not before that.

Al-Qaradawi reports that the Prophet (PBUH) used to pay zakat-ul-fitr after Fajr prayer on the day of `Eid but before the `Eid prayer for the reason that the Muslim community was still small and limited in number. During the time of the Companions the payment was made one or two days before the `Eid. After the spread of Islam the jurists permitted its payment from the beginning and middle of Ramadan so as to ensure that the zakat-ul-fitr reached its beneficiaries on the day of `Eid, thereby avoiding the possibility that the process of distribution would delay reception of the payment to after the day of `Eid¹.

Most scholars today are of the opinion that zakat-ul-fitr can be days in advance of Eid, with the stipulation that it must be paid in Ramadan. If funds are to be distributed offshore, you are encouraged to commence the process as soon as possible so that the poor benefit on the day of Eid.

Organisations that collect zakat-ul-fitr are also encouraged to distribute their collections so that the poor benefit on time.

What to do if you do not pay before Eid Prayers

All scholars agree that if you do not pay zakat-ul-fitr before the Eid prayer, you are not exempt from it. It becomes a debt payable until death².

2. Where to pay?

Zakat-ul-fitr should preferably be paid in the city/town you are residing in. Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, states³: "The Muslim is supposed to pay *Zakat-ul-Fitr* in the country where he or she spends the first night of the month of Shawwal. The reason for this is that *Zakat-ul-Fitr* is not paid because of fasting, rather it is paid due to breaking the fast; that is why it is named *Zakat-ul-Fitr*. That is why if a person dies before Maghrib on the last

day of Ramadan, *Zakat-ul-Fitr* would not be obligatory upon him even if he fasted all the other days of the month.”

Qaradawi explains that payment of zakat-ul-fitr to other countries is permissible and encouraged in there are no poor persons in your locale.

¹ <http://qaradawi.net/arabic/meetings/shreai-&-hayaa/prog-46.htm>

² Shahâtah, Hussayn H., *Fiqh wa Hisâb Zakât al-Fitr*, Cairo 1998, pp. 21-22.

³ Where to Pay *Zakat-ul-Fitr*? – Islamonline – 18 November 2003