



*AMJA Declaration on Expediting or Delaying
Zakat Due to the Economic Circumstances
Associated with the Coronavirus Pandemic*

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Q. What is the ruling of either expediting or delaying zakat payments due to the economic circumstances associated with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?

A. All praise belongs to Allah and may prayers and peace be upon Allah's Messenger.

AMJA's Fatwa Committee has received questions regarding two related issues:


- 1) The ruling on expediting zakat payments before their due dates, in order to help those in need due to these circumstances; and
- 2) The ruling on delaying zakat payments due to the economic circumstances associated with the coronavirus pandemic, as many people are no longer receiving a salary, or their source of livelihood has otherwise come to a halt, leaving many in need of all the money in their possession in order to carry on until the crisis is over.

The Committee's Response:

- 1) It is permissible to expedite zakat payments by paying two years in advance; this is based on an authentic report that the Prophet (peace be upon him) permitted al-'Abbas to expedite zakat for two years. Therefore, it is permitted to pay zakat for the current year in advance, i.e., before it is due. Some jurists have even permitted expedited payments for up to three years. The amount of the payment is to be estimated based on what is expected at its due date. When that time comes, another calculation must be made to determine how much is due. If it is found that what was prepaid is less than what is required, the remainder must be paid.

Expedited zakat payments in these circumstances are an act of righteousness due to the severe needs of those who have lost their jobs and sources of income.

- 2) Regarding the delaying of zakat payments, the fundamental ruling is that zakat must be paid immediately when it is due. The majority of jurists have declared it to be impermissible to delay the payment of zakat beyond its obligatory timeframe and that it is an immediate obligation. So, whoever has enough money to pay the obligatory zakat and enough remaining to suffice for their personal living expenses as well as those of the family in the



prescribed manner, it is an obligation to promptly pay zakat when it is due. This is further stressed due to the need of the poor for assistance, which is greater than any other, at this time.

But if someone does not have enough money to cover their zakat payment without putting them in a bind, i.e., it would leave them without enough to spend on themselves and their family in the prescribed manner, they are afforded a concession to delay the payment until it is easy to make. This is based on the declaration of Imam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy upon him) that zakat payments are not immediate obligations but can be delayed, and on what was explicitly mentioned by Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (may Allah have mercy upon him) regarding the permissibility of delaying zakat payment due to the owner's need of it, until it is easy. As evidence, he cited that the Leader of the Faithful, 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), did not collect the zakat for a year due to the people's need, but then collected it the following year. Regardless of the presence of this concession, the Committee advises that Muslims remain resolute and pay zakat on time, and if at all possible increase the amount as a form of voluntary charity, while trusting that Allah will replace it with better and bless their wealth. This is due to the severe need that their brothers and sisters have in these difficult circumstances.

And all success is found with Allah, the Exalted.

