



AMJA Declaration Regarding Paying Zakat Al-Fitr In Cash

Prepared by Office of the Imam
Islamic Association of Raleigh
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Q. A question was submitted regarding the permissibility of paying Zakat al-Fitr in cash to those in need during the crisis of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and resulting economic downturn.

A. All praise is for Allah, and may prayers and peace be upon Allah's Messenger.

AMJA's Resident Fatwa Committee has received a question regarding the permissibility of paying Zakat al-Fitr in cash to those in need during the crisis of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and resulting economic downturn.

The Committee has deemed it permissible to pay Zakat al-Fitr in cash if that is more beneficial to the recipient. There is no doubt that people's need of money is greater than that of food during the current economic situation.

Giving Zakat al-Fitr in cash is a view which dates back to the early generations as has been narrated by Abu Is-hāq al-Subā'i, one of the most knowledgeable of the Tābi'een (those who succeeded the Companions), who said, "I came in contact with them giving Zakat in cash instead of food." And al-Bukhari included a chapter in his Saheeh entitled "Zakat Paid in Kind," in which Tāwoos related that Mu'adh (may Allah be pleased with him) said to the people of Yemen, "Bring me charity in kind: clothing instead of barley and grain. It will be easier for you and better for the Prophet's Companions in Madinah." This proves the permissibility of distributing (Zakat) based on its value. This was also applied by the rightly-guided caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azeez, because he would instruct his governors to collect it in cash. This is also the view of the Hanafis; and it was the opinion of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, of the Hanbalis, so long as it is more beneficial for the needy.

Additionally, we see no problem with distributing Zakat al-Fitr early—at the beginning of Ramadan—based on need, and because the reason for Zakat is present: that reason is fasting, which was mentioned by al-Shafi'i and his followers. However, delaying payment of Zakat al-Fitr to just before Eid by a day or two is more in line with the Sunnah, according to the narration reported by al-Bukhari on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them), who said, "They would give it before the Fitr by a day or two," and in another narration reported in al-Muwatta, "...by two or three days."



We ask Allah to grant everyone success and to remove hardship and the pandemic. We also ask that He pardon and grant wellbeing.

