21981 - Ruling on giving zakah to Ahl al-Bayt

the question

Is it permissible to give zakah to Ahl al-Bayt?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Ahl al-Bayt (the members of the Prophet's household) are the tribe of 'Abd al-Muttalib (the descendents of 'Ali, the descendents of 'Abbaas, the descendents of Ja'far, the descendents of 'Aqeel, the descendents of al-Haarith and the sons of 'Abd al-Muttalib), and their freed slaves. See al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah, 1/100; al-Sharh al-Mumti', 6/258).

It is not permissible to give zakah to Ahl al-Bayt, because of the evidence narrated forbidding that to them, including the report narrated by Imam Muslim (may Allah have mercy on him) from 'Abd al-Muttalib ibn Rabee'ah ibn al-Haarith (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'zakah should not be given to the family of Muhammad because it is from the dirt of the people.'" (Narrated by Muslim, al-zakah, 1784). Al-Nawawi said concerning the phrase "zakah should not be given to the family of Muhammad", this indicates that it is forbidden whether that is because of their involvement in the collection and distribution of zakah or because of their poverty and need, or for any of the other eight reasons. This is the correct view according to our companions.

"because it is from the dirt of the people" points towards the reason for the prohibition… that is in order to honour them and demonstrate that they are above receiving any dirt. The meaning of the phrase "the dirt of the people" is because it is to purify their wealth and their souls, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

" Take Sadaqah (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it"[al-

Tawbah 9:103]

So it is like washing away something dirty.

This ruling – that zakah is forbidden for the Ahl al-Bayt – is because they have other sources from which money may be given to them if they are in need of it, such as the khums or one-fifth of war booty, people's gifts, and others.

If these sources are no longer available to them, and some of them are in need of money and we cannot find anything other than the zakah money, then it is permissible, indeed obligatory, to give zakah to them, and they are more entitled to it than others, because of the Prophet's advice to take care of them. This was the view of some of the salaf and was regarded as the more correct view by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him), and Shaykh Muhammad al-Saalih ibn 'Uthaymeen agreed with him.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said:

If Bani Haashim are deprived of one-fifth of the khums, it is permissible for them to receive zakah. This is the view of al-Qaadi Ya'qoob and others among our companions. It is also the view of Abu Yoosuf and al-Istakhri among the Shaafa'is, because this is a case of need and necessity.

Al-Fatawa al-Kubra, 5/374

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

If they are deprived or there is no khums as is the case nowadays, then they may be given zakah funds to meet their needs if they are poor and they have no work. This is the view of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah and it is the correct view.

Al-Sharh al-Mumti', 6/257

See al-Fatawa al-Islamiyyah, vol 2. p. 90

Fatawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah, vol. 10, p. 68

And Allah knows best. May Allah bless our Prophet Muhammad.