99327 - Giving meat for zakaat al-fitr

the question

Is it permissible to give meat for zakaat al-fitr?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Zakaat al-fitr must be given in the form of the people’s staple food, because of the report narrated by al-Bukhaari (1510) from Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: At the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) we used to give on the day of (Eid) al-Fitr a saa’ of foodstuff. And Abu Sa’eed said: Our (staple) food was barley, raisins, dried yoghurt and dates.

If the staple food of people in your country is meat, then it is permissible to give it as zakaat al-fitr.

Shaykh al-Islam (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Majmoo’ al-Fataawa (25/68): If the staple food of the people is one of these types, then it is undoubtedly permissible to give their staple food. But can they give staple foods other than these? Such as if their staple food is rice or corn, do they have to give wheat or barley, or is it acceptable for them to give rice and corn? There is a well known difference of scholarly opinion concerning that. The more correct of the two opinions is that the staple food should be given, even if it is not one of these types. This is the view of most of the scholars, such as al-Shaafa’i and others. The basic principle behind giving charity is to help the poor, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “on a scale of the average of that with which you feed your own families” [al-Maa’idah 5:89]. And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) enjoined zakaat al-fitr, a saa’ of dates or a saa’ of barley, because these were the staple foods of the people of Madeenah. If their staple food had been something else, he would not have enjoined them to give something that was not their staple food, just as Allaah did not enjoin that in

the case of expiation. End quote.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in I'laam al-Muwaqqi'een (3/12): This was the usual staple food in Madeenah. As for people in another country or place where their staple food is something else, they have to give a saa' of their staple food, such as if their staple food is corn or rice or figs or some other grain. If their staple food is not a kind of grain, such as milk, meat or fish, then they should give their zakaat al-fitr in the form of their staple food, no matter what it is. This is the view of the majority of scholars, and it is the correct view, and no other can be suggested. The aim is to meet the needs of the poor on the day of Eid and to help them by giving them the staple food of the local people. Based on this, it is acceptable to give flour even though it is not mentioned in any saheeh hadeeth. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Sharh al-Mumti' (6/182): But if the people's staple food is not a grain or a crop, rather it is meat for example, like those who live at the North Pole, whose staple food is primarily meat, then the correct view is that it is acceptable to give it. End quote.

And Allaah knows best.