# 146363 - If a poor person is able to do a job that is not befitting for him, can he take zakaah funds?

**the question**

There are poor families who have grown-up children who are able to earn money, but they do not work on the grounds that this work is not befitting for them. Should they be given zakaah?.

**Detailed answer**

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

It is not permissible to give zakaah to a poor person who is able to earn a living, because he is not regarded as poor so long as he is able to earn a living by working.

It was narrated from ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Adiyy ibn al-Khayyaar from two men who were Companions of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that they came to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and asked him for charity. He looked at them and saw that they were strong and said: “If you wish, I will give to you but there is no share in it for one who is independent of means or one who is strong and able to earn a living.” Narrated by Abu Dawood (1633); its isnaad was classed as saheeh by al-Nawawi in Sharh al-Muhadhdhab (1/171) and by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood (5/335).

It says in Fiqh al-‘Ibaadaat (1/295), which is a Maaliki book: The one who is independent of means is the one who has what is sufficient for one year, or he is able to earn a living, or he has a salary that suffices him. End quote.

In al-Minhaaj ma‘a Mughni al-Muhtaaj (4/173) it says: The poor man (faqeer) is the one who has no wealth and no means of earning a living and meeting his needs. End quote.

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Whoever has a means of earning a living that

will make him and his dependents, if he has dependents, independent of means and he has enough to suffice him every day, is “rich” and has no right to zakaah. This is the view of Ibn ‘Umar and al-Shaafa‘i … End quote from al-Mugni, 6/324

But it is stipulated that the work by which he earns a living should be befitting for him; if it is not befitting for him, such as if he is one of the prominent people then he becomes poor, he is not obliged to do work that is not befitting for him, so he should not be obliged to work in a shop and the like. It is permissible to give zakaah to one who is like this.

Al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Al-Ghazaali was asked about a strong man from a prominent family who usually do not earn a living through physical work; can he take zakaah from the share of the poor and needy?

He said: Yes, this is in accordance with what is mentioned above, that what matters is a profession that is befitting for him. End quote from Sharh al-Muhadhdhab, 6/175

In al-Minhaaj it says: The faqeer (poor person) is the one who has no wealth and cannot earn enough to meet his needs. And he is still regarded as poor even if he can earn a living in something that is not befitting for him. End quote.

The commentator al-Sharahbeeni said in Mughni al-Muhtaaj, 4/174

i.e., it is not befitting for him with regard to his status and dignity, because it undermines his dignity, so it is as if (that job) does not exist. The word ‘earning” in the hadeeth is to be interpreted as referring to permissible and suitable means of earning. End quote.

To sum up: with regard to people who do not work on the grounds that the work is not befitting for them, if the work is indeed not befitting to them, they may take zakaah. But if the work is befitting and others like them do this kind of work without any reluctance, it is not permissible to give them zakaah; rather they should be advised to work.

And Allah knows best.