## 35889 - Who is the wayfarer who may be given zakaah?

**the question**

Can a traveller who does not have any money with which to travel be given zakaah because he is a wayfarer?.

**Detailed answer**

Praise be to Allah.

The wayfarer (ibn al-sabeel) is the traveller who has become stranded, i.e., he does not have enough money to continue his journey. He may be given zakaah to help him reach his destination.

But if he is in his homeland and wants to travel, then he is not a wayfarer, and he cannot be given zakaah on that basis. But if his trip is for an urgent reason such as medical treatment, and he does not have enough money to travel, then he may be given zakaah from the share of the poor, not from the share of the wayfarers.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

The wayfarer is called ibn al-sabeel (lit. “son of the road”) because he sticks to the road, and the one who sticks to something is described as its son in Arabic. So what is meant by ibn al-sabeel is the traveller who is still travelling, the traveller who has become stranded or cut off, i.e., he has lost his money and he does not have enough to enable him to reach his home.

The wayfarer should be given according to his need; it is not essential that he have no money.

Hence we say that we should give zakaah to the wayfarer, even if he is among the richest of people in his homeland, because he has become stranded and because he is in need in this situation. We do not tell him: you are rich so borrow money. He should be given whatever will help him reach his homeland. This may vary, so we should take his situation into account so that he will not feel humiliated.

If he is one of those who are used to travelling first class, should he be given first class or economy?

This is a disputed matter, but it is most likely that he should be given that which will not cause him discomfort and humiliation.

It makes no difference whether the journey is long or short.

As for the one who is setting out on a journey from his home, he should not be given zakaah, because the one who is setting out on a journey from his home cannot truthfully be called a wayfarer. If he says “I need to travel to Madeenah” but he does not have any money, then we cannot give him zakaah on the grounds that he is a wayfarer, because he cannot truthfully be described as such. But if his trip to Madeenah is because of a need, such as medical treatment, and he does not have any money with which to travel, then he may be given zakaah on another basis, namely poverty. End quote from al-Sharh al-Mumti’, 6/154-156.