

Fatwa Number: 4917

Topic: The Ruling on using Zakah money to fund the places of memorizing the Quran

Question:

Is it permissible to use Zakah money to cover the expenses of places of memorizing the Noble Quran if there is no one else in immediate need of that wealth?

Answer:

The following question has a similar answer, the question is:

Some people who are working on some beneficial projects are facing problems in fulfilling their objectives in these projects due to a lack of expenditure, and their projects are funded by donations and Sadaqah. So is it permissible to donate Zakah to them to assist in completing their projects and efforts? Some of these projects include schools for memorizing the Quran, Masjids for men and women, these projects also require funding for the teachers' salaries and students' studies, among other things.

Answer: These beneficial projects are from the good deeds whose benefits are general, like the schools for the memorization of the Quran. In it, the Quran is studied and Islamic knowledge is studied so it falls into the category of calling (Dawah) to Allah. So it falls into the category of 'In the path of Allah' (Fee Sabilillah) which is one of the categories of Zakah. It also falls into the category of "to win over the hearts" (Mu'allifatul Quloobihim) because we hope that by giving them Zakah, we will strengthen their Faith and stop them from sins and assist them in subduing their desires.

So when these institutes use Zakah funding to pay the teacher's salaries then generally they fall into the category of Fuqaraa.¹ Likewise with paying for the education of the students, most of the time they are the children of Fuqaraa, and Allah knows best.

Abdullah Ibn Abdir Rahman Al-Jibreen

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☞ Fuqaraa is usually translated as poor people but it refers to people who have money but not enough to pay their monthly expenses, as compared to Masaakin who are poor people who have no wealth at all. (Translator's Note)

Second Fatwa:

Question:

The questioner asks: We have a centre for teaching the Quran Kareem and in it we have many classes teaching the memorization of the Quran as well as Tajweed. Is it permissible to use Zakah to pay the Huffaz and teachers and to educate the students? Please assist us in this query.

Answer:

Allah says when explaining the categories of the recipients of Zakah, "Charity is only for the poor, the needy, those who work in collecting Zakah, to win over the hearts, to free slaves, to assist debtors, in the path of Allah and to assist the traveler, this has been stipulated by Allah and Allah is Most Knowledgeable, Most Wise," (Surah Tawba, verse 60)

The scholars have differed regarding what is meant by the phrase "In the path of Allah" as it is mentioned in this verse. From them are those who understand the path of Allah to include all good projects. Anything of general benefit which assists in establishing the religion and state, without restricting it to the Mujahideen and guards, like building hospitals, shelters, Islamic schools, institutes and public libraries and any other public project which is for the general benefit of humanity, as well as humanitarian and support institutions that provide public services to community members, as well as spending on Jihad, provided they do not consume the shares other categories mentioned in the verse of charity. (Infaaq Az-Zakah Fee Masaaliha Aaama, pp. 100-101)

Other scholars are of the view that 'in the path of Allah' is restricted to battles in the path of Allah only and that it is not appropriate to use Zakah for anything besides it.

Other scholars are of the opinion that 'in the path of Allah' is restricted to Jihad, Hajj and Umrah.

There are also other opinions on this issue, and it is necessary that we study the evidences of each of the above opinions.

And the best opinion is the first one, it is the opinion that Zakah can be used for any good project and it is not restricted to Jihad only. A group of the scholars of the past and present were inclined to this view and they have some very strong evidences. From among them is the statement of Allah, "As for those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend them in the path of Allah, give them glad tidings of a painful punishment," (Surah Tawba verse 34) In this verse 'in

the path of Allah' has a general meaning and is not restricted to Jihad, otherwise if we had to restrict it then wealth spend on the poor, needy, orphans and others like them would fall into the category of 'hoarding' and that is not the case.

Another verse they quote as evidence is, "the example of those who spend their wealth in the path of Allah is like a grain of corn which sprouts seven ears, each ear has one hundred grains and Allah multiplies for whoever He wishes and Allah is sufficient, All Knowing." (Surah Baqarah, verse 261) and the verse following it, "those who spend their wealth in the path of Allah then do not follow up their charity with reminders and harm, they will have their reward with their Lord and there is no fear upon them, nor will they grieve," (Surah Baqarah, verse 262).

From these verses we understand that the intended meaning of 'in the path of Allah' is a general meaning and not specific. Building upon what we mentioned, spending Zakah money on Centers for studying Qur'an and memorization classes enters into the category of 'in the path of Allah' which is one of the eight categories of the recipients of Zakah.

This is because memorizing the Quran and teaching it are from the types of Dawah to Allah and whatever is Dawah, it enters into the category of 'in the path of Allah' because this category includes all forms of Dawah to Allah. Actually this is from the greatest types of Jihad like how Allah said in Surah Furqan (a Makkan Surah which was revealed before the obligation of physical Jihad), "And make Jihad against them with it (the Quran) the great Jihad,"

The following is a fatwa compiled by the scholars of Saudi Arabia, the Fiqh council has taken the view that the teaching of the memorization of the Quran and matters related to Dawah fall into the category of 'in the path of Allah'.

The following is an extract from a fatwa from the Fiqh Council:

After sitting together to discuss and issue a fatwa regarding one of the eight categories of the recipients of Zakah, which is the category of 'in the path of Allah'. Is the category restricted to the battles in the path of Allah or is 'in the path of Allah' general and includes every type of good work which benefits the public like building Masjids, teaching knowledge, Dawah, etc. After much research, discussion and studying the various opinions, it is apparent that the scholars have two main opinions on this issue:

The first opinion is that the words 'in the path of Allah' in this verse are restricted to battles in the path of Allah, this is the view of the majority of scholars. The people who hold to this view restrict the spending of Zakah 'in the path of Allah' as spending on the expenditures of the Mujahideen in the path of Allah.

The second opinion is that 'in the path of Allah' is general and refers to every good project and general benefit for Muslims like building Masjids, and maintaining them and building schools, housings, constructing roads, preparing the armies, facilitating the Dawah and any other type of good work which benefits Islam and the Muslims. Very few of the early

scholars held to this view but many of the latter scholars were inclined towards it and chose it. After discussing the opinions and the evidences of the two groups, the council has decided the following:

1. Looking at the second opinion, they agree with many verses of the Qur'an like the statement of Allah, "those who spend their wealth in the path of Allah then do not follow up their charity with reminders and harm, they will have their reward with their Lord and there is no fear upon them, nor will they grieve," (Surah Baqarah, verse 262), and it agrees with many Hadith like what is narrated in Sunan Abi Dawood that a man devoted a camel 'in the path of Allah' and a woman intended to make Hajj then the prophet (peace be upon him) said to her, "Ride it because definitely hajj is in the path of Allah,"

2. Looking at the intention of Jihad with weapons, it is to make Allah's word the highest. Making Allah's word the highest is not only the purpose of Jihad but it is also accomplished through Dawah to Allah and establishing His religion through a variety of good and beneficial projects. Both of these things are types of Jihad as is narrated by Imam Ahmad and Nasa'i and authenticated by Al-Haakim that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Make Jihad against the polytheists with your wealth, lives and tongues,"

3. Looking at the fact that Islam is engaged in a creedal and intellectual Jihad with heretics, Jews, Christians and all the enemies of Islam. These groups are waging an intellectual fight so it is necessary for Muslims to face them using the same type of weapons with which they are attacking Islam or what is better than it.

4. Looking at the wars in Muslim lands, each country has their own department of defense and a budget for it, and expenses besides Jihad, they do not require Zakah for military purposes.

For these reasons, the council has concluded that Dawah to Allah and whatever assists in doing so fall under the category of 'In the path of Allah' . End of Fatwa from the council.

The following fatwa is from Shaykh Allama Abdullah Al-Jibreen:

In it, the Quran is studied and knowledge is studied so it falls into the category of calling (Dawah) to Allah. So it falls into the category of 'In the path of Allah' (Fee Sabilillah) which is one of the categories of Zakah. It also falls into the category of "to win over the hearts" (Mu'allifatul Quloobihim) because we hope that by giving them Zakah, we will strengthen their Faith and stop them from sins and assist them in submitting their desires.

So when these institutes use Zakah funding to pay the teacher's salaries then generally they fall into the category of Fuqaraa.² Likewise with paying for the education of the students, most of the time they are the children of Fuqaraa, and Allah knows best.

End of Fatwa from Shaykh Jibreel.

Likewise the great Saudi scholar and Mufti, Shaykh Allaama Abdullah Ibn Baz passed a fatwa that it is permissible to use Zakah funds to pay teachers and students in schools of memorizing the Quran if they were in need.

And the noble Shaykh Abdullah Al-Bassam said:

Zakah can be used to fund Quran Centers in which Muslim children are taught to memorize and understand the Quran, whether all of them or most of them are poor and needy, because this is best since giving Zakah to such institutes combines between fulfilling the needs of the poor and spending on Dawah through memorizing the Quran.

End of fatwa.

Most of the time, the poor are those who attend these circles and schools in question, the students who attend these circles are categorized as students of knowledge and the scholars are all in agreement that students of knowledge, if they are poor, they can be funded with Zakah due to their need.

Some of the scholars say, "The students of knowledge can be given because they are seeking Islamic knowledge and if they were forced to go out and earn then they will be unable to study." Some scholars allow the giving of Zakah to students of knowledge because they fall into the category of 'in the path of Allah' and 'in the path of Allah' has been explained to include seeking knowledge as is mentioned in Durrul Mukhtar 343:2, and Haashiyatut Tahtaawee, p:392.

Ibn Aabideen mentions that some of the Hanafi scholars explained 'in the path of Allah' to include students of knowledge too. (Haashiyaat Ibn Aabideen 343:2) Shaykh Allaama Siddeeq Hassan Khan said, "The path of Allah includes spending of the scholars who establish the religion for the Muslims because they have a share in the wealth of Allah, whether they are rich or poor, rather spending on them is from the most important of matters. This is because the scholars are the inheritors of the prophets and the flag-bearers of the religion, and through them the religion and the Shariah are protected.

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² Fuqaraa is usually translated as poor people but it refers to people who have money but not enough to pay their monthly expenses, as compared to Masaakin who are poor people who have no wealth at all. (Translator's Note)

The scholars among the Sahabah use to take a share of wealth to cover their expenses and sometimes even more than that, whether they were poor or not, and this is very well known, in fact some of them use to take more than one hundred thousand Dirhams. This money which the Muslims distributed to them were from the category of Zakah. The prophet (peace be upon him) once said to Umar, "Give whoever is most in need of it, then whatever you get of this wealth, without you seeking or asking for it, then take it, but if it is not so then do not follow your desires" as is related in the Saheeh, and the matter is apparent (Rawdatun Nidaa 1:533-534)

Imam Nawawi mentioned that if someone is teaching Islamic knowledge and if they had to earn money through other means, the teaching would stop, then it is permissible for them to accept Zakah because teaching Islamic Knowledge is a communal obligation. (Al-Majmoo 6:190)

Some of the Hanafi Jurists have permitted the student of knowledge to accept Zakah money even if he was rich, when he has dedicated himself to seeking knowledge and his studies prevent him from earning wealth, so necessity demands what is needed to fulfill it. (Haashiyatut Tahtaawee, p: 392)

The crux of the matter is that it is permissible to spend Zakah on Quran Centers and study circles of memorizing the Quran and for teaching Tajweed, and for paying the Huffaz, teachers and students.