

Q: 164 – Title: When I give Zakat for previous years, what should I intend? Can I give Zakat through a website? Must I give Zakat according to the lunar year?

#### Question

I have tried to work out to the best of my ability (inshaAllah) how much Zakah to give for previous years that I missed and current year. I'm giving more than I should -- I think -- to be on safe side. However,

I need to know how to give it away now:

- 1) What should the niyat (intention) be for previous years?
- 2) I think you're supposed to give it directly to the poor but can I give through charity websites? Isn't this through a 3rd party?
- 3) Also I'm confused about lunar year and normal year. My Zakah is every 06/June annually in the normal year but how do I give in every lunar year? Please explain all this to me.

#### Answer

**In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.**

**As-salamu 'alaykum wa-rahmatullahi wa-barakatuh.**

1) Your intention should simply be of giving Zakat for the previous years.

2) If Zakat is due upon you, you should exercise precaution by personally discharging the Zakat to a recipient of Zakat. You should only pay your Zakat through an organization if you are satisfied that they are reliable and trustworthy and that they will deliver the entire amount to eligible recipients of Zakat. You must also inform them that it is Zakat money that you are giving them, not optional charity etc. This is because (unlike optional charity etc) Zakat can only be given to eligible poor Muslims in such a way that they are made the owners of the amount. Zakat money cannot be spent on: welfare projects such as constructing wells and buildings; advertising campaigns, supporting the running costs of an organization etc, as no one is made the owner in these cases. The obligatory nature of Zakat demands that one is cautious in regards to it.

3) Zakat becomes compulsory exactly one lunar year after a person first becomes the owner of 'zakatable' assets (such as money, gold, silver, merchandise, etc.) equivalent to or more than the Nisaab (value of 612.35 grams of silver). Thereafter, Zakat will be compulsory on the zakatable assets that he possesses on the same date every lunar year (that is if his zakatable assets are equal to or above the Nisaab).

If the first time that you acquired money equal to or above the Nisaab was on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June, then you must find out the Hijri date of the 6<sup>th</sup>

of June of that year. There are some websites that convert Gregorian dates to Hijri dates.

Once you discover the Hijri date, you must assess your zakatable assets on that Hijri date every year and give Zakat based on your assessment. For example, if the first time that you acquired money over the Nisaab was on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan of this year, then starting from next year, every year on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan, you must assess your zakatable assets and give Zakat based on your assessment (if your zakatable assets are equal to or more than the Nisaab).

*(Al-lubaab: pg 149, Dar Quba; Al-Ikhtiyaar: 1/149, Dar Quba; Contemporary Fatawaa: pg 79, Idara-e-Islamiat)*

**And Allah knows best.**

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