

If the livestock (camels, cattle and sheep) are for the purpose of trade and investment and they are owned for one year, then 2.5% of their value will be given as *zakaat*. If they are not for trade, there is no such *zakaat* on them.

When paying *zakaat*, only female animals are acceptable. A male is not sufficient except in the case of cattle or when given a camel which is a year or two or three years old instead of a she-camel or if all of the livestock are male.

Zakaat on Agricultural Produce

Zakaat is obligatory upon all grains and all produce that are measured by dry volume and stored, such as dates and raisins. The *nisaab* is three hundred *saa* or approximately 624 kilograms.

Different varieties of the same produce, such as different types of dates, will be weighed together to reach the *nisaab*.

What is Obligatory Concerning Grains and Produce

(1) One tenth (*al-ushr*) of the produce is to be given from the produce of land that is naturally irrigated, such as by rainwater only.

(2) One twentieth is to be given from the produce of the land that is irrigated by man-engineered means, such as by water from canals [and so forth].

(3) Three quarters of one tenth is to be given if the produce was partially irrigated naturally and partially irrigated by man-engineered means.

There is no *zakaat* on vegetables and fruits if they are for the purpose of trade. However, 2.5% of their value is given if they reach the level of the *nisaab* and are in one's possession for one year.

What is derived from the sea, such as pearls, rubies and fish, have no *zakaat* on them. However, if they are kept for trade purposes, 2.5% of their value is to be paid if they reach the *nisaab* and are in one's possession for an entire year.

Al-rikaaz refers to buried treasures in the earth. It is obligatory to give one-fifth of that (*al-khums*), regardless of whether it be a large or small amount. This money is to be given to the same categories of those who receive the *fai* (wealth taken from an enemy with no fighting). The remaining four-fifths goes to the person who found the treasure.

Zakaat on Merchandise Goods

Merchandise goods are those that are kept for the purpose of buying and selling in order to make a profit, whether they be immovable property, food, drink, utensils and so forth.

If the value of the merchandise goods reaches the *nisaab* [of monetary assets] and if the goods are in one's possession for one year, then *zakaat* becomes obligatory upon them. 2.5% of the total value is to be given. It is permissible to give 2.5% of the actual goods themselves as *zakaat*.

If the person who holds such goods intends simply to possess them and not deal in business with them, there is no *zakaat* on them.

The payments for a share or profits from trade have *zakaat* on them if the original principle has been in the person's possession for a year and the amounts reach the *nisaab*.

The Conditions for the Obligation of Zakaat

Zakaat is obligatory upon every free Muslim who possesses the *nisaab* with a complete and independent

ownership and the property is in his possession for one year, except in the case of the *ushr* [payment made on produce].

Paying the Zakaat:

The Time for Paying the Zakaat

One must give the zakaat immediately when it becomes due, which is the same ruling for oaths and expiations. This is because an imperative that has not been restricted in any way implies immediate response, and Allah has said [in the imperative],

وَأْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

“Give the *zakaat*” (*al-Muzzammil* 20).

He may delay its payment until a time it is needed or for a near relative or neighbor.

The Ruling Concerning Withholding Zakaat

Whoever denies the obligation of zakaat, knowingly and intentionally, has committed an act of disbelief, even if he pays the zakaat. This is because he has belied Allah, His Messenger and the consensus of the Muslim community. He is to be asked to repent. If he repents, [that is good]; if not, he is to be killed [as an apostate]. If a person withholds the zakaat out of greed or being lackadaisical, it is to be taken from him and he is to be punished due to the sin he has committed.

The guardians of the young or insane are to pay the zakaat on their behalf.

Recommended Acts When Paying Zakaat

(1) One should pay the zakaat openly so that he would be free of any suspicion.

(2) One should distribute it himself to ensure that it gets to its rightful recipients.

(3) Upon paying it, one should say, “O Allah, make it a beneficial gain and do not make it a loss.”

(4) The one who receives the zakaat should say, “May Allah reward you for what you have given and bless you in what remains [with you] and make it purifying for you.”

(5) It is recommended to give it to poor relatives for whom one is not financially responsible.

The Recipients of Zakaat

The groups of people to whom one is allowed to give zakaat are eight. They are the ones mentioned in Allah’s statement,

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا
وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

“Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts are to be reconciled (to the truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom” (*al-Taubah* 60).

Hence, they are as follows:

(1) The poor: those who cannot meet some of their basic needs.

(2) The needy: those who meet most or half of their basic needs.

(3) Those employed to administer the funds: those who collect and watch over the funds—but this is only if they do not receive a wage.

(4) Those whose hearts are to be reconciled to the truth: those leaders of their people who one hopes will embrace Islam or those who are to be given to repel their harm or by giving to them one hopes to strengthen their faith or have someone similar embrace Islam.

(5) Those in bondage: those slaves who have made agreements with their masters to pay for their freedom.

(6) Those in debt— this group falls into two categories: (a) those who have incurred a debt to reconcile opposing parties and (b) a person himself who has fallen into debt and does not have the means to repay it.

(7) In the cause of Allah: to those volunteer fighters striving for the sake of Allah and those calling to the way of Allah and whatever helps and supports their activities.

(8) Wayfarers: those travelers who are cut off from their homeland and do not have wealth with them that will allow them to reach their homes.

Topic Two:

Zakaat al-Fitr

Its Wisdom

[Zakaat al-Fitr is the zakaat that is paid at the end of the month of Ramadhaan.] Its wisdom includes purifying the fasting person from his associated acts of useless and foul speech [during his fasting]. Furthermore, it enriches the poor

and needy and therefore makes it such that they do not have to beg on the Day of Eid.

Its Amount and the Types of Foods in Which it is to Be Given

The amount to be given as *zakaat al-fitr* is one *saa*, a *saa* is four *mudd*, which is approximately equal to three kilograms. It is to be paid in what is normally considered the staple food of the land, whether it be barley, dates, rice, dried yogurt and so forth.

The Time of Its Obligation and the Time of Its Payment

The obligation to [definitely] pay *zakaat al-fitr* comes about by the presence of the night before the Eid. However, it may also be paid one or two days before the day of Eid. Ibn Umar used to do that. A virtuous time to pay it is after sunrise on the Day of Eid, just before the prayer; this is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the people to give their *zakaat al-fitr* before leaving for the prayer.

Upon Whom is Zakaat al-Fitr Obligatory

Zakaat al-Fitr is obligatory upon every free or slave Muslim, male or female, young or old who has staple food more than what he needs for his day and night. It is also recommended to pay it on behalf of the fetus in the womb of its mother.

The Recipients of Zakaat al-Fitr

The recipients of zakaat al-fitr are the same as those for the general zakaat, except that the poor and needy are more deserving of this zakaat because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

أغنوهم عن السؤال هذا اليوم

“Enrich them such that they will not have to beg on this day.”¹

¹ Al-Albaani has discussed the different chains and wordings of this hadith and has concluded that it is a weak hadith. See Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Irwa al-Ghaleel fi Takbreej Abaadeeth Manaar al-Sabeel* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1979), vol. 3, pp. 332-334.

Chapter Four: The Fast

This chapter is comprised of an introduction and the following four topics:

Topic One: The conditions for the fast;

Topic Two: Acceptable excuses to break the fast;

Topic Three: What is recommended, disliked or forbidden during the fast;

Topic Four: *Itikaaf*.

Introduction

Definition of Fasting

Lexically, *al-saum* (الصوم) means to refrain from something. Legally speaking, it refers to refraining, with the intention of worship, from food, drink, sexual intercourse and other acts that break the fast from dawn until sunset.

The History of the Obligation of Fasting

Allah obligated the fast for the Nation of Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the same way that He obligated it for the previous peoples. Allah says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may attain *taqwa* (fear of Allah)” (*al-Baqarah* 183). That obligation began in the month of Shabaan in the second year after the Hijrah.

The Benefits of Fasting

Fasting has spiritual, societal and health benefits. The spiritual benefits include the practicing and strengthening of one’s patience, knowing how to control oneself and help oneself in that realm. The soul finds within itself the ability to have *taqwa* and to improve upon it.

Societal benefits include the fact that it adds a certain system and unity to the society, engenders love for justice and equity, brings about mercy and compassion among the believers as well as good behavior. Furthermore, it keeps the society from evil and wickedness.

Health benefits include the purifying of the intestine, improving the health of the stomach, cleansing the body of impurities, decreasing the level of fat in the body and decreasing the heaviness of the stomach due to fat.

Confirming the Beginning of the Month of Ramadhaan

The beginning of the month of Ramadhaan is confirmed by one of two means: First, the previous month, Shabaan, is completed. In other words, if Shabaan finishes thirty days, the thirty-first day will definitely be the beginning of the month of Ramadhaan.

Second, the new moon is seen. If the crescent of the month of Ramadhaan is seen on the night before [what would be] the thirtieth of Shabaan, then the month of Ramadhaan has begun and it is obligatory to fast. Allah says,

فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ

“Whoever is present [that is, not travelling] among you during the month shall fast” (*al-Baqarah* 185).

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الْهَيْلَالَ فَصُومُوا وَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمُوهُ فَأَفْطِرُوا فَإِنْ غُمَّ
عَلَيْكُمْ فَصُومُوا ثَلَاثِينَ يَوْمًا

“If you see the crescent, fast. And if you see it [at the end of the month], break your fast. If it is obscured to you, then fast thirty days.” (Recorded by Muslim.)

If a people of a certain land see the crescent, they must fast. However, the birth or appearance of the moon will be different for different places. The birth in Asia is different from the birth in Europe and its birth in Africa is different than its birth in America, for example. Based on that, every country or locale will have its own ruling. But if all of the Muslims throughout the earth fast according to one sighting, that will be from the beautiful aspects of Islam and a sign of affection, oneness and brotherhood.

For the beginning of Ramadhaan, the testimony of one just person is sufficient or two just people as the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) accepted the testimony of one person concerning his sighting of the crescent of Ramadhaan. (Recorded by Muslim.) However, for the sighting of the moon of Shawaal to break the fast, this is not confirmed except by the testimony of two just witnesses, as the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) did not allow the witness of only one just person for the breaking of the fast. (Recorded by Muslim.)