

Essential Questions &  
Answers Regarding:  
**Zakāt al-Fiṭr**

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فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

{Whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord} [ 18:110]

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## INTRODUCTION

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# 4

In the name of Allāh, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of mercy.

Below are a series of important rulings pertaining to Zakāt al-Fiṭr, presented in a question and answer format.

This compilation covers most of the rulings that a person requires to be able to pay Zakāt al-Fiṭr easily.

Allāh knows best, and guidance lies with Him alone.

Written by,

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28<sup>th</sup> Ramaḍān, 1437h,  
Corresponding to the 3rd July, 2016.

In the name of Allāh, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy.

It is incumbent upon every Muslim to seek knowledge and learn, more so before a particular act of worship is obligated. Below is a concise summary of the basic rulings of Zakāt Al-Fiṭr.

### 1. WHAT IS ZAKĀT AL-FIṬR?

Zakāt al-Fiṭr is an obligatory form of charity during Fiṭr i.e. when the fasting of Ramaḍān is broken with 'Eid.

### 2. WHY IS IT CALLED ZAKĀT AL-FIṬR?

It is called Zakāt al-Fiṭr because this Zakāh is restricted to a particular time which is Fiṭr i.e. the last Maghrib of Ramaḍān.

### 3. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ZAKĀT AL-FIṬR and ZAKĀH?

There are two main differences between them:

Firstly: Zakāt Al-Fiṭr is restricted to a time i.e. the end of Ramadan, whereas Zakāh is paid anytime throughout the year whenever it is due.

Secondly: Zakāt Al-Fiṭr is an obligation upon the person, where Zakāh is an obligation upon wealth. For this reason, Zakāh is taken from the wealth child if the conditions are fulfilled, whereas Zakāt Al-Fiṭr is paid on behalf of the child.

### 4. WHAT IS THE WISDOM BEHIND ZAKĀT AL-FIṬR?

The Prophet ﷺ beautifully explained the wisdom for the obligation of Zakāt Al-Fiṭr, he said, **'it is purification for a fasting person, from idle talk and false speech, and also to feed the poor.'**<sup>1</sup>

i.e. despite a fasting person trying to stay away from false speech during fasting, sometimes we may fall short.

Therefore, Zakāt Al-Fiṭr is a purification from this.

<sup>1</sup> Narrated by Ibn 'Abbās; Collected by Abu Dawūd.

It is also a way of us showing our gratitude to our Lord, who bestowed upon us Ramaḍān and allowed us to live until ‘Eid. The third wisdom is to give some food to the poor to enable them to enjoy ‘Eid without asking others.

## 5. WHO NEEDS TO PAY ZAKĀT AL-FIṬR?

The Prophet ﷺ obligated Zakāt Al-Fiṭr on “Muslims, free or slaves, male or female, young or old.”<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, it is an obligation upon every Muslim, however the responsibility falls on the head of the household such as the father or husband, to donate it on behalf of his dependants. This is assuming they have enough food for themselves.

It is not obligated to pay Zakāt Al-Fiṭr on behalf of a foetus, however it is recommended and desired. Also, it is not legislated to pay Zakāt Al-Fiṭr on behalf of a deceased person.

## 6. WHAT SHOULD BE DONATED?

The Prophet ﷺ obligated Zakāt Al-Fiṭr to be given “a Ṣā’ of dates, a Ṣā’ of barley...”<sup>3</sup>

Abu Sa’īd Al-Khudrī narrates that the companions, ‘would give Zakāt Al-Fiṭr on behalf of every young and adult, the free and enslaved in the era of the Messenger of Allah one Ṣā’ of staple foodstuff...”<sup>4</sup>

The above – and other narrations – show us that Zakāt Al-Fiṭr should be donated in the form of the staple food of one’s locality.

## 7. HOW MUCH SHOULD BE DONATED?

The measure used at the time of the Prophet ﷺ was a Ṣā’.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Narrated by Ibn ‘Umar; collected by Al-Bukhārī & Muslim.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Narrated by Abu Sa’īd Al-Khudrī; Collected by Muslim.

<sup>5</sup> A Ṣā’ is a measure of volume which was used in the Prophetic era, it is ‘four double handfuls of food’ measured by an average man.

In modern measurements this relates to:

- Rice: 2.3kgs
- Raisins: 1.64kgs
- Dates: 1.8kgs
- Wheat: 2.04kgs
- Lentils 2.1kgs
- Flour: 2.06kgs
- Couscous 1.8kgs<sup>6</sup>

From the above measurements we can see that Zakāt Al-Fiṭr ranges from 1.5kgs to 2.5kgs approximately depending on the type of food.

For this reason, the scholars have recommended for **3kgs** of food to be given as a matter of caution.<sup>7</sup>

## 8. WHO IS ZAKĀT AL-FIṬR GIVEN TO?

Zakāt Al-Fiṭr is given to any poor person who cannot afford his daily food for himself and his family. There are three possibilities for Zakāt Al-Fiṭr:

1. The correct measure of food should be given to poor people in your locality. This is the Sunnah and it fulfils the objective of community cohesion.
2. If poor people are not found in one's community, then the correct measure of food can be transferred to a different community or country, especially if the poor are relatives.
3. Finally, if none of the above are possible, then a person should give the monetary value of food, this is not from the

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<sup>6</sup> This was calculated by a number of students in the presence of Shaykh Ferkous of Algeria. Ref: [www.sahab.net/forums/index.php?howtopic=131485](http://www.sahab.net/forums/index.php?howtopic=131485).

<sup>7</sup> Refer to: [www.binbaz.org.sa/article/353](http://www.binbaz.org.sa/article/353).

Sunnah however it is done for a particular need or benefit as in the above scenario.<sup>8</sup>



## 9. HOW IS IT GIVEN?

From the above it is clear that the best practice is to give it directly to the poor in one's locality. A person should include his wife and children in every step of the donation – buying the food, each child measuring their own quantity, packaging it and finally donating it to the poor.

However, we should also be sensitive to the poor who are receiving it, that they are not to be made to feel belittled, therefore where appropriate anonymity can be maintained.

## 10. WHY IS IT GIVEN TO THE POOR SPECIFICALLY?

Eid is a day of happiness and festivities, and nobody should feel left out on such a day. For this reason, essential food items are distributed to the poor without them asking. It is also encouraged for Muslims to give gifts and honour the poor in other appropriate ways.

## 11. CAN MONEY BE GIVEN INSTEAD OF FOOD?

Zakāt al-Fitr is an act of 'Ibādah, therefore it must be performed according to the sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. In the Āḥādīth pertaining to ZF, the Prophet ﷺ stipulated a quantity of food, therefore it must be given in food.

The companions after the death of the Prophet ﷺ continued the practice of giving Zakāt Al-Fiṭr in the form of food as opposed to its value in money, even though many of them became wealthy.

However, it is permitted for a person to give the value of Zakāt Al-Fiṭr in money to a person or charity, who will then purchase and distribute food in the name of the person.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah said: "As for donating Zakāt Al-Fiṭr in monetary value (i.e. as opposed to actual food) then there is a difference of opinion. Is it permitted unrestrictedly? Is it forbidden unrestrictedly? Is it permitted in some instances due to a need or a benefit? There are three opinions [as above] in the Madhhab of Imām Aḥmad and others. [The last opinion] is the most just and fair." Majmū' al-Fatāwa Vol. 25 Page 79.

## 12. WHEN SHOULD IT BE GIVEN?

The best time to donate the Zakāt Al-Fiṭr is before the ‘Eid prayer, however it can be given earlier by a day or two especially if it is felt that it may not reach the poor in time. If it is delayed until after the ‘Eid Prayer, it is no longer considered as Zakāt, but mere charity.

The Prophet ﷺ said, **‘whoever donates the Zakāt before the Eid Prayer then it is an accepted form of Zakāt, and whoever gives it after the Prayer it is a Ṣadaqah.’**<sup>9</sup>

And Allāh knows best.

May peace and blessings be upon His prophet, his companions and followers until the Day of Resurrection.

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<sup>9</sup> Narrated by Ibn Abbās; Collected by Abu Dawūd.