

Zakat-ul-Fitr (Fitrah)

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Zakat-ul-Fitr (Fitrah)

Who needs to pay, what is due, when to pay?

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This booklet is not a substitute for theological advice. The objective is to explain the importance of Zakat-ul-Fitr. You should seek the advice of an appropriately qualified person.

Allah knows best.

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Contents

Zakat-ul-Fitr (Fitrah)	Page
Introduction	3
Who needs to pay?	3
What is due?	4
Who pays Fitrah?	4
When to pay Fitrah?	4
Recipients	4

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Zakat-ul-Fitr (Fitrah)

1. Introduction

Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqi, member of the Fiqh Council of North America states: "*Zakat-ul-Fitr* is a special charity of the month of Ramadan. This charity should be given during the month of Ramadan anytime before the *'Eid-ul-Fitr* prayer. Because it can be given until the *'Eid-ul-Fitr* time, it is called *Zakat-ul-Fitr*. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, urged Muslims to pay this charity in the month of Ramadan."

Narrated Ibn Umar: Allah's Apostle (PBUH) enjoined the payment of one Sa' of dates or one Sa' of barley as Zakat-ul-Fitr on every Muslim slave or free, male or female, young or old, and he ordered that it be paid before the people went out to offer the Eid prayer. (Bukhari).

Zakat-ul-Fitr is often referred to as Fitrah.

Zakat-ul-Fitr/Fitrah was introduced for two reasons: In his book *Fiqh-us-Sunnah*, the late Egyptian scholar Sheikh Sayyed Sabiq states: "Its purpose is to purify one who fasts from any indecent act or speech and to help the poor and needy. This view is based upon the hadith reported by Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, and ad-Daraqutni from Ibn 'Abbas. The Messenger of Allah, upon whom be peace, enjoined zakat ul-fitr on the one who fasts to shield one's self from any indecent act or speech and for the purpose of providing food for the needy."

Clearly there are two purposes for the fitrah payment. Dr Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, Dean of the University of Qatar statesⁱ: "one is related to the individual; for completion of his fast and compensation for any shortcomings in his acts or speech. The other is related to society; for the spreading of love and happiness among its members, particularly the poor and needy, during the day of *'Eid*." Dr Yusuf further statesⁱⁱ: "*Zakat-ul-Fitr* is associated with the *'Eid* and is meant to create happiness in such a way that includes the poor and the needy. That is why the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "**Make them (i.e. the poor) rich on this day (i.e. the day of *'Eid*.)"**

2. Who needs to pay?

Under Hanafi law, fitrah is only payable by a person who has the equivalent of nisaab (the qualifying limit to pay zakat), after deducting all debts. The lower of gold or silver is accepted by scholars as the qualifying nisaab. This approximates to A\$200.00. You are required to have the equivalent of nisaab only for the day of Eid to qualify to pay fitrah.

Calculation of nisaab:

The nisaab identified by the Prophet (PBUH) for assets (other than livestock and crops) is detailed below:

NISSAB		Grams	Tolas	Grains	Troy Oz.	US\$/ Troy Oz.	Australian Dollar Equivalent
Gold	20 Mithqaals	87.48	7.5	1350	2.8125	438.7	\$1,667
Silver	200 Dirhams	612.36	52.5	9450	19.6857	6.94	\$184

A number of scholars are of the opinion that the lower value should be used that is, \$184.

Some scholars are of the view that fitrah should be paid by all, provided they have sufficient food above their basic necessities for the day – Dr. Al-Qaradawi: “It is a virtuous wisdom of Islam that it makes this Zakah obligatory not only on the rich, but also upon nearly every Muslim, for you can hardly find a person who does not possess one Sa` of food above his main staple food for the duration of one day and night. The wisdom behind this obligation, therefore, is to prepare the poor to practice benevolence and feel the dignity and honour of giving in charity. Allah described the believers with these words, “Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity...”

3. What Is Due?

The amount due is the market value of 1,6329 kg of wheat or 3,2659 kg of barley. The Hanafi school are of the opinion that the monetary value of the wheat can be paid as fitrah.

4. Who Pays Fitrah?

The Hanafi school are of the opinion that it is obligatory for a qualifying person to pay fitrah for himself and his minor children. It is not obligatory to pay fitrah for his wife. If the minor children have nisaab of their own then the father is not obliged to pay fitrah on their behalf. He may pay their fitrah out of their fundsⁱⁱⁱ.

The same principle applies to women - however a woman only pays fitrah for her children in the absence of a father (due to death). Some Hanafi scholars are of the opinion that a woman is never obliged to pay fitrah for her children^{iv}.

5. When To Pay Fitrah?

The Prophet (PBUH) said: “Therefore, the *Sadaqah* (charity) of the person who gives before the `Eid prayer is the real *Sadaqah*, but if someone delays and gives it afterwards, his charity will be an ordinary one.” (Reported by Abu Dawood and Ibn Majah.).

It is normal practice to pay fitrah in the three days before Eid. Many pay it after dawn and before Eid prayer. Under Hanafi law, fitrah becomes wajib from the dawning of the Eid day. Not paying fitrah does not discharge one of the liability. The Hanafi school are of the opinion that a person is liable to pay for a missed fitrah until death.

Fitrah needs to be paid in the city/town you are residing in. Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, states^v: “The Muslim is supposed to pay *Zakat-ul-Fitr* (i.e., *Zakah* of breaking the fast) in the country where he or she spends the first night of the month of Shawwal. The reason for this is that *Zakat-ul-Fitr* is not paid because of fasting, rather it is paid due to breaking the fast; that is why it is named *Zakat-ul-Fitr*. That is why if a person dies before Maghrib on the last day of Ramadan, *Zakat-ul-Fitr* would not be obligatory upon him even if he fasted all the other days of the month.”

6. Recipients

Most scholars are of the view that fitrah is only payable to those who qualify to receive zakat.

The Quran identifies the following as zakat recipients:

a) the poor and needy (*Fuqaraa* and *Masakeen*). Scholars identify three types of poor and

needy:

- those who do not own any assets at all;
 - those who do not own any property or assets in excess of basic necessities (basic necessities include a house, furniture, clothing, etc.);
 - those who own property in excess of basic necessities but below the value of nisaab.
- b) persons who are appointed for the collection of zakat (*Al Aamileen*). These persons are not themselves needy but they are collecting on behalf of a fund from where allocations will be made to those who qualify.
- c) persons (*Muallafatul Quloob*) who have recently accepted Islam and are in need of basic necessities as they are being persecuted by their former associates and require assistance. The intention is not to bribe new Muslims but help them feel the spirit of Islam by aiding them (if aid is required).
- d) slaves (*Ar-Riqaab*).
- e) persons who are in debt (*Gharimeen*) and do not possess any other wealth or goods with which they could repay what they owe. Some scholars are of the opinion that a person will only qualify as a *Gharimeen* if the person's net wealth is below the nisaab. The person's basic necessities of life (house, furniture, etc.) will not be taken into account.
- f) persons who are struggling and striving in Allah's cause (*Fi-Sabeelillah*).
- g) a traveller (*Ibnus-sabeel*) who whilst wealthy at his residence is stranded and is in need of assistance, may be given zakat.

ⁱ Qaradâwî, Yûsuf al-, *Fiqh al-Zakâh*, 4th ed., vol. II, Mu'assasat al-Risâlah, Beirut, 1980, pp. 922.

ⁱⁱ Islamonline

ⁱⁱⁱ Ullah: *The Essential Hanafi Handbook of Fiqh*, page132.

^{iv} This principle is quoted in a number of books: Bakhtiar, Sallie, Ullah.

^v Where to Pay *Zakat-ul-Fitr?* – Islamonline – 18 November 2003