

# Rulings of Zakat al-Fitr

وليتفقوا (٥)



Prepared by  
The General Iftaa' Department  
In The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

In The Name Of ALLAH, The Entirely Merciful, The Especially Merciful  
All perfect praise be to Allah the Lord of The Worlds. May His peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Mohammad and upon all his family and companions.

This is a pamphlet addressing the most important jurisprudential questions commonly raised regarding the rulings of Zakat al-Fitr according to Islamic Law. Its content is derived from authoritative legal rulings (fatāwā) issued by the General Iftaa` Department, drawing upon the established juristic principles documented in the texts of the Shāfi`ī school in particular, and the recognized texts of the four major Sunni schools of thought in general.

The purpose of Zakat al-Fitr is the obligatory giving of a specific monetary value or amount of food to a poor Muslim on behalf of every Muslim individual; thus, it is a physical Zakat (Zakat Badaniyyah).

This Zakat, which is connected to the month of Ramadan, is an obligation (Faridah) among the obligations of Islam. It is narrated on the authority of Abdullah ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: «The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) made Zakat al-Fitr obligatory, a Sa` of dates or a Sa` of barley, upon the slave and the free, the male and the female, the young and the old among the Muslims, and he commanded that it be paid before the people go out for the prayer [of Eid]». [Reported by Al-Bukhari (No. 1503) and Muslim (No. 984)].

### Conditions for the Obligation of Zakat al-Fitr

Zakat al-Fitr becomes obligatory upon a Muslim who possesses wealth that is surplus to his needs and the needs of those he is obliged to support for the night and day of Eid. The «needs» refer to the essential requirements such as food, clothing, and basic necessities.

### The Wisdom behind Zakat al-Fitr

Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) described it as: A purification for the fasting person from idle talk and obscenities, and a provision for the poor». [Reported by Abu Dawud (No. 1609)]. It is similar to the prostration of forgetfulness (Sujud al-Sahw) in prayer, as it compensates for any deficiency that occurred in the act of worship. Zakat al-Fitr was also legislated to meet the needs of the poor and the needy on the

day of Eid. Therefore, a Muslim must give it willingly and offer it to the poor with kindness and affection.

### **Does the Validity of the Fast Depend on Paying Zakat al-Fitr?**

The validity of the fast does not depend on the payment of Zakat al-Fitr, as it is a separate obligation from the obligation of fasting. Thus, whoever does not pay this Zakat has a valid fast, but he is sinful for neglecting the payment of Zakat al-Fitr, and his reward will not be complete due to the shortcoming in fulfilling this obligatory charity.

### **Upon whom is Zakat al-Fitr Obligatory?**

Zakat al-Fitr is obligatory upon every free Muslim who witnesses the sunset of the last day of Ramadan, whether male or female, young or old.

### **For whom is Zakat al-Fitr Paid?**

A Muslim pays Zakat al-Fitr for himself and for those whose maintenance is obligatory upon him. These include: his wife, even if she is wealthy, his minor child, and he also pays it for his poor father and mother whom he supports.

As for the fetus, if it is born before the sunset of the last day of Ramadan, Zakat must be paid for it. However, if it is born after the sunset of the last day of Ramadan, it is not obligatory to pay Zakat for it. It is not obligatory for a fetus in the womb, nor for someone who died before the sunset of the last day of Ramadan.

### **Recipients of Zakat al-Fitr**

Zakat al-Fitr is given to the eight categories of recipients mentioned by Allah the Almighty in His Glorious Book»: Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of God; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by God, and God is full of knowledge and wisdom. «[At-Tawbah/60].

1 - The Poor (Fuqara`): One who has no obligatory maintenance, no wealth, and no earnings that sufficiently cover his needs, such as one who needs ten but finds no more than four.

2 - The Needy (Masakin): One who finds something that partially meets his needs but is not sufficient for his appropriate standard of living, such as one who needs ten but obtains no more than nine.

**3 - Those Employed to Collect [the Funds] (Al-`Amilin `Alayha):** Those appointed to collect Zakat without a fixed wage, such as the collector (Sa`i) and the writer (Katib); they are given the equivalent of a fair wage.

**4 - Those Whose Hearts are to be Reconciled (Al-Mu`allafatu Qulubuhum):** One who has embraced Islam but whose faith is weak, or a noble person among his people whose conversion is expected to lead to the conversion of his peers.

**5 - To [Free] Those in Bondage (Fi al-Riqab):** Those who have entered into a valid contract of manumission (Mukatabun); they are given what assists them in their freedom if they cannot fulfill the contract.

**6 - Those in Debt (Al-Gharimin):** The debtor, who is of several types, including: one who incurred debt for himself and spent it on permissible matters; he is given the amount of his debt if it is due and he is unable to pay it. Another type is one who incurred debt to resolve a dispute between two conflicting parties; he is given the amount he borrowed if it is due and he has not paid it.

**7 - In the Cause of Allah (Fi Sabilillah):** The volunteer fighters (Ghuza Mutatawwi'un) in Jihad; they are given [from Zakat] even if they are wealthy.

**8 - The Wayfarer (Ibn al-Sabil):** Travelers or those intending a permissible journey who are in need; they are given what enables them to reach their destination.

### **What is the Amount of Zakat al-Fitr?**

The amount is a Sa` of food. A Sa is approximately 2.5 kilograms. A Muslim should give it from the staple food of his country. In the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the staple food is wheat, as bread is the main component of the diet. Therefore, Zakat al-Fitr is 2.5 kg of wheat per person. It is also permissible to give rice, as it is also considered a staple food in the country.

### **When is Zakat al-Fitr Paid?**

The obligation to pay Zakat al-Fitr is established upon witnessing the last part of Ramadan. It is permissible to pay it in advance from the beginning of Ramadan. It is Sunnah (recommended) to pay it on the day of Eid before the Eid prayer. Delaying it until after the Eid prayer

is Makruh (disliked). If a Muslim delays it past the sunset of the day of Eid, he is sinful and must make it up (Qada`).

Imam al-Nawawi al-Shafi`i said: «The texts of al-Shafi`i and his companions agree that the best time to pay it is on the day of Eid before going out for the Eid prayer, and that it is permissible to pay it throughout the entire day of Eid, and that it is not permissible to delay it past the day of Eid. If he delays it, he is sinful and must make it up. They called the payment after the day of Eid a make-up (Qada`)». [Al-Majmu` (Vol.6/P.84)].

### **Is it Permissible to Transfer Zakat from the Payer`s Country?**

It is permissible to transfer Zakat—including Zakat al-Fitr—to a country other than the one where it became obligatory, as long as there is a deserving recipient in the country to which it is transferred, especially if a need arises for it, such as giving it to a relative, to someone in greater need, or when a disaster occurs that necessitates urgent aid, and similar reasons.

This opinion has been adopted by later Shafi`i scholars and many of the earlier ones. Imam Qalyubi al-Shafi`i said in Al-Hashiyah ʿala Sharh al-Minhaj: «The second opinion is that transfer is permissible and suffices, and it was chosen by a group of al-Shafi`i's companions, such as Ibn al-Salah, Ibn al-Farkah, and others. Our Shaykh, following our Shaykh al-Ramli, said: It is permissible for a person to act upon this opinion for himself, and likewise, it is permissible to act upon the saying of any trustworthy Imam in all rulings, such as al-Adhra`i, al-Subki, and al-Isnawi, according to the relied-upon view». [End quote].

### **Is it Permissible to Give Zakat to a Married Son, a Married Sister, or a Poor Brother?**

It is permissible to give Zakat to both a brother and a married son if they are poor, because the maintenance of a married son is not obligatory upon his father. Similarly, the maintenance of an adult, sane, and physically capable older brother is not obligatory upon his father. Both of them are considered among the poor Muslims.

As for a poor married sister, if her husband's maintenance is insufficient to cover her basic needs—either due to his poverty or his stinginess—then it is permissible to give Zakat to her, and she is even more deserving than others. The Zakat payer receives two rewards:

the reward for maintaining kinship ties (Silat al-Rahim) and the reward for charity (Sadaqah).

However, if she is sufficiently maintained by her husband, it is not permissible to give Zakat to her under the category of the poor and needy. But it is permissible to give Zakat to her if she falls under one of the other categories, such as being in debt (Gharimah). It is stated in Fatawa al-Ramli (Vol.3/P.142): «The relative to whom it is permissible for his kin to give his Zakat is the one whose maintenance is not obligatory upon him. The relative to whom it is not permissible for his kin to give his Zakat is the one whose maintenance is obligatory upon him. It is permissible for him to give to him from the other shares [of Zakat] if he is eligible for them, except for the share of the poor and the needy».

### Is it Permissible to Pay Zakat al-Fitr in Cash?

The default is to pay Zakat al-Fitr in food. However, the Hanafi jurists permitted the payment of Zakat al-Fitr in value (cash) or in food.

Imam al-Kasani al-Hanafi said: «It is permissible to give the value [of the food] in Dirhams, Dinars, coins, commodities, or whatever he wishes, for all of that [barley, wheat, dates]. This is our view». [Bada'i al-Sana'i fi Tartib al-Shara'i (Vol.2/P.72)].

Imam al-Kasani justified the payment in value by saying: «Our argument is that the true obligation is to enrich the poor, based on the Prophet's saying: 'Enrich them [the poor] from asking [for charity] on a day like this.' Moreover, enrichment is achieved with value, and is even more complete and abundant, because it is closer to fulfilling the need. This shows that the text [of the Hadith] is based on the underlying reason of enrichment, and that allowing the value does not truly contradict the ruling of the text». [Bada'i al-Sana'i (Vol.2/P.73)].

Among the evidence supporting the Hanafi view is what Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated in his Musannaf from Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, who wrote regarding Sadaqat al-Fitr: «Half a Sa` for every person, or its value, half a Dirham».

Ibn Abi Shaybah also narrated in his Musannaf from Al-Hasan, who said: «There is no objection to giving Dirhams for Sadaqat al-Fitr». And from Zuhayr, who said: «I heard Abu Is-haq saying: 'I found them giving Dirhams for Sadaqat Ramadan (i.e., Zakat al-Fitr) based on the

value of the food»]. [Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah (Vol.2/P.398)].

Imam Ibn Qudamah al-Hanbali said in Al-Mughni: «Al-Thawri and Abu Hanifah said: It is permissible [to pay the value]. This was also narrated from Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz and Al-Hasan». (3/(Vol.87/3)

It is permissible to pay the value of Zakat al-Fitr in cash, as per the resolution of the Board of Iftaa`, Research, and Islamic Studies. The value of a Sa` of the staple food of our country (2.5 kg approximately) is estimated annually according to the market price of wheat. This estimation is for the obligatory amount, and whoever wishes to give more will have the reward.

### **What is the Ruling on Condemning One Who Pays Zakat al-Fitr in Cash?**

It is not permissible to condemn one who pays Zakat al-Fitr in cash, because the issue is one of scholarly disagreement (Mas`alah Khilafiyyah), and this opinion was held by one of the Imams of the recognized schools of thought (Madhahib) of the Muslims, namely Imam Abu Hanifah al-Nu`man (may Allah be pleased with him), who is one of the Imams of religion and guidance. This opinion has been adopted by the General Iftaa` Department in Jordan.

Furthermore, issuing the Fatwa based on the cash value is more appropriate for the poor in our time, due to the multitude of people's needs, which are not limited to food alone. Paying Zakat al-Fitr in food may also be difficult for the poor, forcing them to sell the food at a loss to obtain cash to meet their needs and purchase necessary items.

It is an established principle among the jurists that issuing a Fatwa based on the recognized schools of thought of the Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah is permissible to take into account the circumstances surrounding the questioner, and to facilitate the needs that arise for people. Therefore, there is no objection to providing ease and facilitation for people in their acts of worship by allowing them to pay Zakat al-Fitr in cash, following a recognized Madhhab among Muslims, which is the Hanafi Madhhab .And Allah the Almighty knows best.

# دائرة الإفتاء العام الأردنية

هاتف دائرة الإفتاء العام: 06/2000166



[www.aliftaa.jo](http://www.aliftaa.jo)



[facebook.com/aliftaaajo](https://facebook.com/aliftaaajo)



[twitter.com/aliftaaajo](https://twitter.com/aliftaaajo)



00962780315555



<https://telegram.me/iftaa>

