

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful to Creation, the Merciful to the Believers. May Allah send the best of blessings and of peace upon our Master Muhammad, his Family, and Noble Companions.

AL-AJWIBA ‘AN AHKAAM ZAKAATIL-FITR
(The Answers Concerning the Legal Rulings of Zakatul-Fitr)

Says the poorest of slaves in dire need of the mercy of Allah, Abu Muhammad Khalil Abdullahi (may Allah cover him in His mercy, ameen): All praise belongs to Allah, the Perfect Lord of all creation. May the blessings and peace be upon our Master Muhammad and upon his family and companions. All praise belongs to Allah who blessed us with Iman and annihilated the darkness of disbelief by means of the light of Islam. Who delivered us from the pitch-black shadows of innovation and guided us by means of the illuminated sunnah of His Messenger Muhammad (Allah bless him and grant him peace).

Introduction

This small book, *Al-Ajwiba ‘An Ahkaam Zakaatil-Fitr (The Answers Concerning The Legal Rulings Of Zakatul-fitr)*, is a compilation of the fundamental legal rulings concerning *zakaat al-fitr* from some of what has been related regarding this act of worship in the Book of Allah, the Sunnah, and the statements of the scholars.

It has been compiled in a question-and-answer format in order to facilitate its comprehension and implementation by the believers.

It is common in these days for one to mistake *Zakatul-Fitr* for the annual payment of *Zakat* that is also obligatory. By doing so they feel that this relieves them of paying the annual payment. So within

this introduction I intend to briefly explain what *zakat* is and to focus on giving clarity to *Zakatul-fitr* and its tenets. *Z a k a t* is an obligatory charity due in wealth¹ with certain conditions and to be distributed to specific groups of people at specific times.

Zakat is a pillar in Islam and is mentioned numerous times throughout the Qur'an in many verses connected with Salat (prayer). The Muslims have unanimously agreed that *Zakat* is an obligation. Withholding from paying *Zakat* (without justifiable cause²) is a sin and denying its obligation is disbelief (kufr) by the Book, the Sunnah and the Consensus.

And Success Is with Allah!!!

¹ Wealth indicates agriculture, gold, silver, business inventory and livestock.

² Poverty

The Answers Concerning the Legal Rulings of Zakatul-fitr

What is the linguistic meaning of *Zakatul-fitr*?

The Arabic word *zakat* has two meanings (1) to purify and (2) to grow, while *al-fitr* means to cut off or to end one's fast. *Zakatul-fitr* is also called *sadaqatul-fitr*. The word *sadaqa* means charity.

وَعَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: فَرَضَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ زَكَاةَ الْفِطْرِ طُهْرَةً لِلصَّائِمِ مِنَ اللَّغْوِ

Narrated Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) Allah’s Messenger (saw) prescribed *Zakatul-fitr* as a purification of the fasting person from empty and obscene talk

What are the proofs from the Shariah that establish the giving of *Zakatul-fitr*?

The proofs from the Qur’an that establish the giving of *Zakatul-Fitr*

Allah the Exalted says,

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى وَ ذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى

“Prosperous indeed are those who purify themselves. And remember the name of their Lord and perform the prayers.” (Qur’an 87:14-15).

The proofs from the Sunnah that establish the giving of *Zakatul-fitr*

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ فَرَضَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ زَكَاةَ الْفِطْرِ صَاعًا مِنْ شَعِيرٍ عَلَى الْعَبْدِ وَالْحُرِّ وَالذَّكَرِ وَالْأُنْثَى وَالصَّغِيرِ وَالْكَبِيرِ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَ أَمَرَ بِهَا أَنْ تُؤَدَّى قَبْلَ خُرُوجِ النَّاسِ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ

And it has been related in the *Saheeh* of al-Bukhari that Ibn Umar said ‘The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace)

made giving Zakatul-fitr obligatory in the amount of a sa'a [that is, 2.03 liters/64 oz.] of dates or a sa'a of barley, upon every slave, free person, male, female, child, and adult from the Muslims. And he ordered that it be given before people left for the prayer."

The proofs from the 'Ijma (consensus of the scholars) that establish the giving of *Zakatul-fitr*

All that is necessary to know regarding the rulings of *Zakatul-fitr* can be found in the commentaries of the scholars on this verse and hadith, and in them is sufficiency.

What are the Virtues of *Zakatul-fitr*?

It is understood that giving charity is a form of purifying and cleansing of oneself as indicated by Allah ta'ala:

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا

"Take sadaqa from their wealth to purify and cleanse them" (9:103)

The *Zakatul-fitr* is a means of purification from our idle deeds and shameful speech during the blessed month of Ramadan; and it enables poor Muslims to have sufficient provision for the day of Eidul-fitr and feel its general joy along with the wealthy.

As confirmed by the statement of Ibn Abbaas (RA)

وَعَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: فَرَضَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ زَكَاةَ الْفِطْرِ طُهْرَةً لِلصَّائِمِ مِنَ اللَّغْوِ وَالرَّفَثِ وَطُعْمَةً لِلْمَسَاكِينِ

Narrated Ibn ‘Abbas (ra) Allah’s Messenger (saw) prescribed *Zakatul-fitr* as a purification of the fasting person from empty and obscene talk and as a food for the poor.

What is the virtue of Paying *Zakat ul Fitr* on time?

The reward of our fasting during the month of Ramadan is suspended between the heavens and the earth until we give the *Zakatul-fitr*, as mentioned in other narrations. The obligation of paying it is not removed if one fails to pay on time, but the reward is not the same if paid outside of the preferred time. As is mentioned in the tradition of Ibn Abbaas(RA):

“فَمَنْ أَدَّاهَا قَبْلَ الصَّلَاةِ فَهِيَ زَكَاةٌ مَقْبُولَةٌ وَمَنْ أَدَّاهَا بَعْدَ الصَّلَاةِ فَهِيَ صَدَقَةٌ مِنَ الصَّدَقَاتِ”

“If anyone pays it before the prayer it will be accepted as *Zakat* and if anyone pays it after the prayer it will be counted as a *sadaqah* like any other *sadaqah*”.

Is it obligatory for one to give *Zakatul-fitr*?

Giving *Zakatul-fitr* is obligatory (in Arabic, *fard* or *wajib*), which means that giving it with sincerity is an action that will be rewarded by Allah. While neglecting to give it is an action deserving of the punishment of Allah.

Who must give *Zakatul-fitr*?

Every free Muslim must give *Zakatul-fitr* who has enough provision for himself and his dependents³ basic living expenses for the day of Eidul-fitr, even if he must borrow the *Zakatul-fitr* (given that he hopes to repay it). If one can only afford to give part of the *Zakatul-fitr* then one must do so, starting with himself then his wife, then his children, and so on until he has given what he can afford. The *Zakatul-fitr* of a male child must be given by the child's father or guardian unless the child is wealthy in which case it is not obligatory to do so.

Sons who reach puberty⁴ merely by age (that is, eighteen years) or afflicted with a mental handicap must have their *Zakatul-fitr* given by their father or guardian. The Muslim male responsible for the financial maintenance of an unmarried Muslim female (like her father, uncle or brother) gives the *Zakatul-fitr* on her behalf even if she is wealthy until she marries. Likewise, a husband must give *Zakatul-fitr* for his wife even if she is wealthy.

When does it become obligatory to give *Zakatul-fitr*?

It becomes obligatory to give *Zakatul-fitr* after sunset of the last day of the month of Ramadan or at dawn on the first day of Shawwal according to some scholars. The command of giving *Zakatul-fitr* was stated by the Prophet (saw) as narrated by Ibn Umar:

”أَمَرَ بِهَا أَنْ تُؤَدَّى قَبْلَ خُرُوجِ النَّاسِ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ“

“And he ordered⁵ that it be given before people left for the prayer⁶.”

³ For example, if a man is financially responsible for his wife, three children, and mother, who are all Muslims, he must give six sa'a for *Zakatul-fitr*.

⁴ Adherence to age is only necessary when all the other signs of maturity (wet dream, facial or pubic hair) have not become apparent.

⁵ When an order is given by the Messenger of Allah (saw) it becomes an obligation.

⁶ The 'Eid prayer

What must be given for *Zakatul-fitr*?

The amount that must be given for oneself and each Muslim dependent is **one sa'a or 2.03 liters / 64oz.** (based on the sa'a of the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) of the main staple food of one's region (this can be measured using a liter measuring container or special mood cups manufactured in Muslim lands) from one of the following categories of food:

- 1) Wheat,
- 2) Barley,
- 3) Corn kernel
- 4) Rice (this is the best food to give in the United States since it is a staple here),**
- 5) Dates,
- 6) Raisins, or
- 7) Dried cheese that has had its cream extracted;

Unless there is a main staple other than these eaten by the people of one's region. Giving *Zakatul-fitr* in the form of cash is not allowed according to the popular opinion (*mashhur*) of the overwhelming majority of scholars. However, the *madhhab* of *Imam Abu Hanifa* makes a dispensation for the payment of its value in cash⁷ (Allah be pleased with them all).

⁷ Give according to the value of the product ex. 5lb bag of rice = \$2.99 x husband, wife and 2 kids = \$11.96

And not the way it has been practiced amongst us in this time. Leaders charging \$7 to \$12 per family member this is a bid'ah and an injustice to the people.

Did anyone from the early community pay zakat al-fitr with money?

The opinion that it is permissible to pay the value of zakat al-fitr in money was instituted during the period of the Tabi`in (the generation following the Companions) and was supported by many scholars and a caliph.

Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated on the authority of `Awn: I heard the letter of `Umar ibn `Abdul-`Aziz was read to `Adiyy, the ruler: "The people of the Divan should take from every Muslim half a dirham." The same reported that Al-Hasan said: There is no harm to pay the value of zakat al-fitr in dirhams; that Abu Ishaq said: I caught them while they were paying the value of zakat al-fitr in dirhams; and that `Ata' narrated: I used to give the value of zakat al-fitr in silver dirhams (Musannaf, 4/37-38).

Abu Bakr Al-A'mash (may God grant him mercy) said, "It is better to pay zakat in the form of wheat grain instead of paying its cash equivalent because this is closer to the original command [for zakat] and further from scholarly contention. It is therefore more religiously cautious." The jurist Abu Ja'far (may God have mercy on him) who has an opposing opinion, said, "It is better to pay the cash equivalent of zakat because this is closer to benefitting the poor since it will allow them to purchase their immediate needs. The reason for specifying wheat and barley at the time of the Prophet was because they were used as a medium of exchange in al-Medina. But here where currency is the medium of exchange, it is preferable to pay the cash equivalent of zakat."

This is likewise the opinion of a group from among the successors and scholars reckoned to be among them, including:

- Al-Hasan al-Basri. He was reported to have said, "There is no objection to paying zakat ul-fitr in dirhams."
- Abu Ishaq al-Suba'i: Zuhair reported that he heard Abu Ishaq say, "I was present at the time of the Companions and they paid the cash value of zakat ul-fitr."
- 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul-'Aziz: Waqi' narrated through Qura who said, "We received a letter from 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul-'Aziz concerning zakat ul-fitr. It said, 'Half a sa` for each person or its equivalent of half a dirham.' "

What acts are recommended with regard to giving *Zakatul-fitr*?

It is recommended to

- 1) Distribute it after dawn of the first day of Shawwal and before the Eid Prayer from the best of one's food, and
- 2) To not give more than one sa'a for oneself and each of one's dependents, to do otherwise is a reprehensible innovation.

To whom is *Zakatul-fitr* given?

The *Zakatul-fitr* is only given to those who fulfill all of the following conditions: The recipient must be

- 1) Free,
- 2) Muslim,
- 3) Poor (in Arabic, *faqir*), meaning he or she does not possess sufficient provision to meet their basic living expenses for the coming year, and
- 4) A person who is not a descendant of Hashim, the great-grandfather of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace).

Based on the hadith of Muslim on the authority of Al-Muttalib bin Rabi'ah that the Prophet (saw) said,

إِنَّ الصَّدَقَةَ لَا تَنْبَغِي لِأَلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

“Sadaqah is not befitting for the family of Muhammad (saw).”

Who distributes the *Zakatul-fitr*?

The way of the Salaf was to distribute their *Zakatul-fitr* themselves, without entrusting this responsibility to any one else, and this is what is preferred because the good of both worlds depends on uncompromising adherence to their methodology and path.⁸ However, one may also entrust one's *Amir/Imam* or whomever the *Amir/Imam* has appointed to distribute one's *Zakatul-fitr* to deserving recipients.

⁸ Shaykh Uthman ibn Fodio said in his *Ihya us Sunnah* about adhering to the methodology of the Salaf, "...meaning going to the very limit in adhering to the *sunna* and avoiding innovation - that all of the Companions, the *Taabi`een* and the *Taabi`at-Taabi`een*, may Allah be pleased with all of them, adhered to. They are the ones whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, testified to with moral excellence and virtue by his saying, "The best generations are my generation, then those who follow them, and then those who follow them."

Conclusion

This concludes what I intended to compile in this short text. For additional benefit the following points have been mentioned:

- 1) *Zakatul Fitr* is given for oneself and each dependent.
- 2) The amount given is 1 *sa`a* (4lb/64oz) per dependant
- 3) One may give *Zakatul-fitr* up to two days before the day of *Eidul-fitr*;
- 4) One has sinned if he delays giving the *Zakatul-fitr* to its recipients until sunset on the day of *Eidul-fitr*. Its obligation is not removed by the passage of time if one ever neglects to pay it; rather, one must give *Zakatul-fitr* for oneself and any dependents for every year one failed to do so;
- 5) *Zakatul-fitr* must be given to those Muslims who are in need in one's community, or it can be partially distributed to the needy in one's community while most of it can be distributed to others who are in more need in other locations before sunset on the day of *Eidul-fitr*.
- 6) If a woman is wealthy and her husband is poor it is permissible for her to give her *Zakatul-fitr* to her husband, but a man cannot give his *Zakatul-fitr* to his wife.
- 7) If one does not have the means to accurately measure a Prophetic *sa`a* then one should know that **one *sa`a* is made of four *mood*** and a "*mood*" (that is, 0.51 liters) is the amount of rice or any other food that a person of average-sized hands (neither too large nor too small).

Please remember that 1 *sa`a* = 2.4 liters which = 64oz which = 4lb . And Allah knows best.

I ask the reader's forgiveness for any errors that may be in this text and that you correct my mistakes. Whoever devotes himself to what is in this book and takes some benefit from it, I ask that he include me in his pious supplication, that Allah may benefit me by it

in this world and the Hereafter. It has been related in the Sahih Muslim on the authority of Abu Darda, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said, “The supplication of an individual Muslim for his brother who is absent is answered. There sits at his head an Angel charged with his needs. Whenever he supplicates for blessings for his brother, the Angel charged with his affairs says, ‘Ameen - and the like for you.’”

Here ends the book called **Al Ajwiba ‘An Ahkaam Zakaat ul Fitr**. All praises are due to Allah who blessed us with the blessing of *Iman* and *Islam*, and who guided us by our master and chief, Muhammad, upon him from Allah ta'ala be the best blessings and most abundant peace.

Abu Muhammad Khalil Abdullahi
Tajdid Sunnah Institute
Philadelphia, PA

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