

Sadaqah Al-Fitr (Charity of Breaking Fast)

Similar to Zakat, Sadaqah Al-Fitr is amongst those acts of worship prescribed in Islam that are related to wealth. It also known as Zakat Al-Fitr, Zakat al-Badn, Sadaqah As-Saum, and Sadaqah Al-Ra's. It was legislated in the second year after Hijra before the legislation of Zakat.

Hukm (Legal Ruling)

All four schools of thought agree that Sadaqah Al-Fitr is necessary, although there is some disagreement upon the conditions that render it necessary (*wajib*) and its degree of necessity.

Hanafis:

According to the Hanafis Sadaqah Al-Fitr is *wajib* (necessary) based on the Hadith related from ibn Umar (ra); “The Messenger of Allah (saw) obligated Zakat Al-Fitr, one sa’ of dates or one sa’ of barley, upon every muslim slave, free, male, female, young and old person and ordered that it should be given before people leave for the prayer” (Bukhari). The Hanafis say that it is *wajib* because it is established by a speculative text (*dalil dhanni*), which is a text that allows for the possibility of interpretation.

Malikis, Shafis, and Hanbalis:

According to the Malikis, Shafis and Hanbalis Sadaqah Al-Fitr is obligatory (*fard*) based on the apparent wording of the Hadith of ibn Umar (ra) mentioned above.

It is important to note that the difference between the schools of thought regarding the hukm of Sadaqah Al-Fitr is merely verbal; meaning it's a difference in terminology. What the Malikis, Shafis and Hanbalis are calling *fard* in this instance is what the Hanafis refer to as *wajib*.

Conditions that Render Sadaqah Al-Fitr Wajib

Sadaqah Al-Fitr is *wajib* upon one who meets the following three conditions:

- 1) Islam
- 2) Freedom
- 3) Possession of *nisab* (minimum amount) in excess of the amount needed to cover housing necessities and debts. It does not matter whether a person owns the minimum amount for a year or not or whether it is growing or not.

On Whose Behalf is One Required to Pay Sadaqah Al-Fitr

A man is required to pay the *fitrah* from his own money for himself and his young children (who do not have wealth). It is not necessary for him to give Sadaqah al-Fitr on behalf of his wife or mature children.

When Does it Become Necessary to Pay

Sadaqah Al-Fitr becomes *wajib* from the dawn of Eid al Fitr. Therefore, if a person dies before dawn, or a child is born after dawn, or comes into possession of the *nisab* after dawn, or accepts Islam after dawn, then it will not be *wajib* upon them.

A person can pay his Sadaqah al-fitr before Eid; however, the way of the Sunnah is to pay it after fajr before leaving for the place where Eid prayer will be performed. Ibn Umar (ra) narrates that the Prophet (saw) ordered that zakat al-fitr be paid before people leave for salah (Eid).

If it is not paid before Eid or on the day of Eid, then it can be paid (as qada) at any time. One is not excused by delaying it, although they have committed an offence by delaying it.

How to Give Sadaqah Al-Fitr

Sadaqah Al-Fitr can be paid with one of the four following types of food:

- 1) Wheat, 2) Dates, 3) Barely and 4) Raisins

The amount to be paid is half a sa' (1.6 kg) of wheat or a sa' (3.2 kg) of dates or barely. According to Imam Abu Hanifa (ra) raisins are like wheat; whereas Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad (ra) held that raisins are like barely.

It is also permissible to give Sadaqah al-fitr in cash that is equivalent to the amount food mentioned above. For instance, if a person wants to pay Sadaqah al-fitr in cash then they would look at the market price of wheat, dates or barely on the day of Eid and give how much 1.6 kg of wheat or 3.2 kg of dates or barely costs. The Hanafi jurists are of the opinion that it is better to pay the equivalent in cash because the purpose of Sadaqah al-fitr is to make the poor and needy free from want on the day of Eid.

Recipients of Sadaqah Al-Fitr

The recipients of Sadaqah al-fitr are the same recipients as that of zakat; they are

- 1) The poor
- 2) Destitute and helpless
- 3) Those in debt
- 4) Those fighting for Islam

5) The wayfarer (traveler stranded away from his hometown).