

# Fasting and Zakaah

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## ***Fasting and Zakaah***

All praise is due to Allaah alone; may He exalt the mention of the last of all Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, his family and all his companions.

This is a booklet that briefly addresses the rulings of Fasting, including a clarification of the categories of people relative to the obligation of fasting, the immeasurable benefits of fasting, and things that nullify fasting. We will also address the benefits and rulings pertaining to *Zakaah*.

### ***Fasting***

- Fasting is an act of worship during which the slave of Allaah refrains from all those things that nullify fasting from dawn until sunset.
- Fasting during *Ramadhaan* is one of the pillars of Islaam, as the Prophet *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* said, "***Islaam was established on five pillars; the two testimonies (of faith), the establishment of prayer, fasting, obligatory charity and the pilgrimage.***" (*Al-Bukhaari & Muslim*).

### ***The Categories of People with regard to Fasting***

- Any Muslim who has reached the age of puberty, who is capable of fasting and is not a traveller, must observe fasting.
- A disbeliever does not have to fast, nor does he have to make up for what he missed before becoming a Muslim.
- Children who have not yet reached the age of puberty should be commanded to fast in order to get accustomed to it.
- An insane person or an elderly one who does not possess the faculty of being able to distinguish between matters does not have to fast nor feed people as expiation.

- People with chronic diseases do not have to fast or make up for missed fasts, but must feed a needy person for every missed day of fasting.
- A temporarily sick person, a pregnant or breast-feeding woman who fears harm for herself or her baby, a woman in her menstrual period or post partum bleeding, or a person who must break his fast for an important cause, such as to rescue a drowning person, may break his or her fast and make it up after *Ramadhaan*.
- A traveller has the option to observe fasting or to break his fast and make up for it later.

### *Nullifiers of Fasting*

Committing or consuming any of the nullifications of fasting due to forgetfulness, ignorance or coercion does not nullify the fast, for Allaah says what means, "***Our Lord! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear***" (*Al-Baqarah: 286*) also, "***Except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is at rest with Faith***" (*An-Nahl: 106*) and "***And there is no sin on you concerning that in which you made a mistake except in regard to what your hearts deliberately intend.***" (*Al-Ahzaab: 5*). One's fasting is not nullified if he eats or drinks thinking that the sun has set or that dawn has not yet arrived, nor if he swallows water by mistake during *Wudhoo'*, or has wet dreams or eats or drinks forgetfully.

### **There are seven things that nullify Fasting:**

1. Having sexual intercourse during the daytime. If one does this, he should make up for that day and also pay for the expiation of freeing a slave if one is available. Otherwise, one should fast for two consecutive months or feed sixty needy people.
2. Deliberate discharge of sperm by kissing, hugging, touching, or by masturbating.
3. Deliberately eating or drinking anything, whether beneficial or harmful, including smoking cigarettes.
4. Anything having the same effect as eating and/or drinking. This can be by means of needles, drops or supplements - as long as it has any nutritional

value, and this includes a blood transfusion for those who need it. On the other hand, if these things do not have any nutritional value then using them would not affect one's fast in any way.

5. Drawing out blood and *Hijaamah* (cupping). *Hijaamah* is something that is done by means of needles or razors to make holes in the skin in order to draw bad blood out of the body. However, if one has a nosebleed or bleeding due to extracting a tooth, then this will not affect the fast, as this is unintentional and beyond one's control.
6. Intentionally vomiting, but if one were to vomit unintentionally, this would not nullify the fast.
7. Menstrual or post-natal bleeding.

### *Some points*

- It is permissible to intend fasting without having bathed after having sexual intercourse, then bathe after dawn.
- A woman whose menstrual or post-natal bleeding ceases before dawn must observe fasting, even if she has not yet had a bath when the time for fasting begins.
- It is permissible to extract teeth while fasting, and to treat the resulting bleeding, or use eye or ear drops, even if the taste of the drops reaches one's mouth.
- The use of a *Siwaak* (a special wooden toothbrush) is allowed any time during the day whilst fasting.
- It is permissible to cool oneself by pouring cold water on one's head or to sit in front of an air conditioner whilst fasting.
- It is permissible to use a treatment spray for hard breathing or asthma whilst fasting.
- It is permissible to wet one's lips or rinse one's mouth whilst fasting.
- It is recommended to delay *Suhoor* (the pre-dawn meal) until very close to dawn.
- It is recommended to hasten in breaking the fast as soon as the sun sets and eat ripe dates to do so, and if these are unavailable then dry dates; if these are unavailable then one should drink water, and if even this is unavailable then any other type of permissible food or drink is fine. If the fasting person

cannot find anything then he should intend to break his fast in his heart and that will suffice.

- It is recommended to increase acts of obedience and refrain from the disobedience of Allaah during one's fast.
- It is mandatory to adhere to all obligations such as the five daily prayers at their due time with the congregation, and to refrain from prohibitions like lying, backbiting, dealing with interest and any other action or speech which is prohibited. The Prophet *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* said, "***The one who does not refrain from falsehood in action, speech and insulting others, then Allaah has no need for him to abstain from his food and drink.***" (*Al-Bukhaari*).

### ***Zakaah***

Although it holds a great rank in Islaam, being one of the pillars without which no one's Islaam is complete, as in the *Hadeeth* previously mentioned, many people have neglected this obligation.

*Zakaah* is one of the most obvious merits of Islaam, because it reflects the extent to which Islaam takes care of those who accept and practice it; it is vital due to the great benefits it contains and the dire need of the poor for it.

The benefits of *Zakaah* are many. The following are some of them :

- Assuring the feeling of harmony between the rich and the poor in the community, since man by nature becomes inclined towards those who are kind to him.
- Purifying the soul, elevating its rank, and thwarting stinginess from the soul. This is indicated by the saying of Allaah what means, "***Take Sadaqah (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it.***" (*At-Tawbah: 103*).
- Getting the Muslim accustomed to generosity and mercy towards the needy.
- Causing one to become worthy of the blessings of Allaah, Who increases one's provision and replaces what one spends. Allaah says what means, "***And whatsoever you spend of anything (in Allaah's Cause), He will replace it. And He is the Best of providers.***" (*Saba': 39*). The Prophet

*sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* said that Allaah said, **"O son of Aadam! Spend (in charity) and I will provide for you."** (Al-Bukhaari & Muslim).

Allaah gave a severe warning to those who become stingy and refrain from paying out their due *Zakaah*. Allaah says what means, **"And those who hoard up gold and silver (Al-Kanz: the money, the Zakaat of which has not been paid) and spend them not in the way of Allaah, announce unto them a painful torment. On the Day when that (Al-Kanz: money, gold and silver, the Zakaat of which has not been paid) will be heated in the fire of Hell and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, (and it will be said unto them): `This is the treasure which you hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what you used to hoard.'" (At-Tawbah: 34-35).**

Any person who amasses wealth and does not pay its due *Zakaah*, will be punished by his wealth on the Day of Resurrection. The Prophet *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* said, **"No owner of a treasure (of gold or silver) who does not pay Zakaah will be spared, for his treasure will be heated in the Fires of Hell and then made into plates. His flanks and his forehead will be branded with them until Allaah pronounces judgment on His servants during a day lasting fifty thousand years."** (Muslim).

The Prophet *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* also mentioned the owner of cattle who does not pay its due *Zakaah*, **"Whoever is made wealthy by Allaah and does not pay the Zakaah of his wealth, then on the Day of Resurrection his wealth will be made into a bald-headed, poisonous, male snake with two black spots over his eyes. The snake will encircle his neck and bite his cheeks and say, 'I am your wealth, I am your treasure.'" Then he *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* recited the saying of Allaah which means, **"And let not those who covetously withhold of that which Allaah has bestowed on them of His Bounty (wealth) think that it is good for them (and so they do not pay the obligatory Zakaat). Nay, it will be worse for them; the things which they covetously withheld shall be tied to their necks like a collar on the Day of Resurrection."** (Aal 'Imraan: 180) (Al-Bukhaari).**

*Zakaah* is due on four things: produce, cattle, gold and silver, and trade

merchandise. These things have a specific *Nisaab* (a minimum amount which requires *Zakaah*) below which payment of *Zakaah* is not required.

- *Nisaab* on produce is three hundred *Saa'* of dates, raisins, rice or wheat, where each *Saa'* is four times all what one can hold in two handfuls. When this amount is reached, one should pay ten percent (10%) of that in *Zakaah* if the trees which produce these foodstuffs were watered naturally, by the water of rain, rivers or springs. However, if one had to personally water these trees himself, then the *Zakaah* due on their produce is only five-percent (5%), as the Prophet *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* has informed us.
- *Nisaab* on cattle is a very detailed and lengthy issue, which is available in any book on *Zakaah*, but since we intended this booklet to be brief we will not mention these details here.
- The *Nisaab* on silver and gold is approximately US\$900 (which is the equivalent of 92 grams of gold depending on the price of gold), and the amount of *Zakaah* due is two and a half (2.5%) after a full lunar year of possessing it. Another item which is related to this type is gold and silver ornaments that women wear; *Zakaah* applies to these ornaments whether they were in their possession all that time or lent to others, because the Prophet *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* said, **"No owner of a treasure (of gold or silver) who does not pay Zakaah will be spared, for his treasure will be heated in the Fires of Hell and then made into plates."** (*Muslim*). This is a ruling which is general and applies to gold and silver used for trade or anything else as he, *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* also said to a woman who had two golden bracelets, **"Do you pay Zakaah on them?"** She replied, "No." So he then said: **"Are you pleased that Allaah may put two bangles of fire on your arms?"** Thereupon she took them off and placed them before the Prophet *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* saying: **"They are for Allaah and His Apostle."** (*Abu Daawood & An-Nasaa'i*).
- Merchandise used for trade must be evaluated at the end of the year, and two and a half percent (2.5%) of its value must be paid out as *Zakaah*. *Samurah*, may Allaah be pleased with him, said, **"The Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam used to command us to pay Zakaah on anything which we used in**

*trade.*" (Abu Daawood). Land used for trade is also included, as well as cars and machinery. As for buildings which are rented out and not being sold, *Zakaah* only applies on its rent after the full lunar year has finished. Likewise is the case of personal cars and taxis which are not used for trade, but if a taxi owner collects money which reaches the *Nisaab* and this remains unused for a full lunar year, then he should pay its *Zakaah*, regardless of the reason why he saved this money.

*Zakaah* is also applicable on money saved for orphans or the insane whenever it reaches the *Nisaab* and has been saved for a full lunar year; guardians of this money should pay out the due *Zakaah* on their behalf.

*Zakaah* is the right of Allaah which should not be taken lightly; it should not be given to those who are not eligible; a person should not pay it in order to bring benefit unto himself or to prevent harm from befalling him, rather it should be paid to a deserving category of people regardless of whether or not it brings benefit to him. It should be paid willingly and with sincerity to Allaah in order to receive the reward from Allaah and fulfil one's obligation concerning this pillar.

Allaah explained in His book the categories of people who are deserving of *Zakaah*; Allaah says what means, ***"As-Sadaqaat (here it means Zakaat) are only for the Fuqaraa' (poor), and Al-Masaakeen (the poor) and those employed to collect (the funds); and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islaam); and to free the captives; and for those in debt; and for Allaah's Cause (i.e. for Mujaahidoon - those fighting in a holy battle for the sake of Allaah), and for the wayfarer (a traveller who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allaah. And Allaah is All-Knower, All-Wise"*** (At-Tawbah: 60). Allaah concluded this verse with two of His Great Names to bring to the attention of his slaves that He is All-Knowing of the affairs and dealings of His slaves, and of who is worthy of taking *Zakaah* and who is not; and that He is All-Wise in what He legislates and what He decrees, and that he would not prescribe anything unless it is suitable, even if people do not fully realize the benefit and wisdom behind the legislation.