

## Zakah, Zakat-ul Fitr, Last 10 days of Ramadan & I'tikaaf

DISCLAIMER: This reminder was originally delivered in Arabic on Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Any meanings lost in translation are not to be attributed to the speaker as reminders are translated by volunteers. The mosque has no official translator and volunteers often have no formal qualifications to translate on the day. Please forgive any errors as they are from our human weakness and any right guidance is from God.

Zakat (Alms) is one of five obligatory pillars of Islam. It should be taken out from money (saved and merchandise and goods of trade and commerce), farm produce and cattle. It is a right of God for the sake of blessing and purifying. In the Quran, Zakat is linked with prayer in 82 verses, for example, in [Al-Noor 24:56]: "And establish prayer and give zakāh" and in a hadith the prophet (pbuh) said: "Islam is built upon five things, testimony that there is no God except God, and that I am His messenger, the performance of prayers, the compulsory Zakat, fasting in the month of Ramadan, and the performance of the pilgrimage to the House of God." The legitimacy of Zakat is well confirmed in both Quran and Sunnah.

Whoever gives Zakat believing that it is obligatory and seeking the reward from God shall have glad tidings of a good allotment and return from God Almighty "But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] – He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers" [Saba 34:39] and "The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allāh multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allāh is all-Encompassing and knowing." [Al-Baqara 2:261].

Unfortunately, Some Muslims neglect this great pillar - forgetting that God almighty has extracted them from the wombs of their mothers not knowing a thing and provided them with His provision and His blessings - so they forget to fulfil the duty of being grateful to God and give Zakat. Those who greedily withhold what God has given them from being spent for His sake and did not give this small amount of money which God has enjoined upon them shall reflect upon this warning from God: "And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allāh has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection. And to Allāh belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth. And Allāh, with what you do, is [fully] Acquainted." [Al-Umran 3:180] and in another verse "And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allāh – give them tidings of a painful punishment. The Day when it will be heated in the fire of Hell and their foreheads, their flanks and their backs will be seared with it, [it will be said], 'This is what you hoarded for yourselves, so taste what you used to hoard.'" [Al-Tawbah 9:34-35]. Amongst the Zakat is the one that was linked with the month of fasting: Zakat-ul-Fitr

Zakat-ul-Fitr became obligatory by the prophet (pbuh) in the year 2 Hijri as the narration in Al-Muwatta by Abdullah bin Umar stated 'The prophet enjoined the payment of one sa' of dates, or one sa' of barley upon the free, the slave, the male, the female Muslims'. Zakat-ul-Fitr was legislated in order to purify the fasting person as well as to help others. Abdullah bin Abbas said: "The Messenger of God obligated Zakatu-l-Fitr to serve as purification for the one fasting, from any vain speech or indecent behaviour; and also to serve as food for the poor and the needy" – so this enriches them from asking in the day of Eid so they can join other Muslims in their joy and happiness.

Zakat-ul-Fitr is obligatory upon every capable young and old Muslim who has more than he/she needs in the day of Eid. Its starting time is the dawn of Eid day and in another opinion from the sunset of that last day of Ramadan. It is permissible to give it a day or two before Eid as it was mentioned in Al-Muwatta that 'Abdullah bin Umar used to send his Zakat-ul-Fitr to the person who collected it two or three days before breaking the fast (day of Eid).' Whoever fails to give it before Eid prayer shall do it afterwards Abdullah bin Umar narrated 'the prophet (pbuh) ordered that Zakat-ul-Fitr is to be given before the people leave for the prayer'. Scholars have said that if it is paid after this time, it becomes a normal charity and not part of the Zakah ul-Fitr.

The amount of Zakat-ul-Fitr is one sa' of food which constitutes the staple diet of the localities in which one resides like rice, barley or wheat. One sa' is 2250 grams which is the obligatory amount upon every capable Muslim. It is also permissible to give Zakat-ul-Fitr in money which is the opinion of many scholars nowadays as the value of the food is more beneficial to the poor than the food. This was the opinion of Umar bin Abdul-Aziz and some scholars.

#### Second khutba: the season of the last ten days of Ramadan

The last ten days of Ramadan is approaching us as we are already in the middle of the month of Ramadan. In those ten days a Muslim shall seek their ticket to freedom from hellfire by the mercy of God as it is narrated: "Ramadan is the month, whose beginning is mercy, its middle, forgiveness and its end, emancipation from the fire (of hell)". The prophet (pbuh) said: "Gabriel came to me and said, 'O Muhammad, if someone reaches the month of Ramadan and then dies but is not forgiven (for making full use of the month), so may God cast him away and he will enter Hell fire, Say Amen', so I said 'Amen'". Aisha narrated 'He (pbuh) would strive [to do acts of worship] during the last ten days of Ramadan more than he would at any other time.' His worship was a mixture of prayers, supplication, remembrance and Quran recitation. Aisha also narrated: 'in the last ten of Ramadan, the prophet (pbuh) used to tighten his waste belt (i.e worked harder or kept away from intimacy with his wives), pray all night, and wake up his family for the night prayers' seeking the night of power and encouraging his family to do so. Aisha reported that the prophet (pbuh) used to practice I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan until for the duration of his life and then his wives used to practice I'tikaf after him.

I'tikaf is a spiritual retreat in the mosque during the last ten days of Ramadan with the intention of devoting the time to worship. The prophet (pbuh) used to start his I'tikaf before the sunset on the night of 21st of Ramadan and to leave it after the sunset of the last day of Ramadan. The purposes of I'tikaf are:

- ✓ Seeking the night of power
- ✓ Devoting the time to God (SW) and abandoning people for the joy of God's closeness
- ✓ Treating the heart and directing it towards God.
- ✓ Devoting the time for worship only including prayers, supplication, remembrance and Quran recitation.
- ✓ Protecting the fasting from the self's desires that might affect it.
- ✓ Doing less permitted Dunya affairs trying to achieve asceticism (Zuhd).

Amongst the etiquettes of I'tikaf:

- ✓ Having the right good intention and seeking the reward from God.
- ✓ Realising the wisdom behind I'tikaf which is devoting time for worship.
- ✓ Not leaving the place of I'tikaf except for an important need.
- ✓ Preserving the deeds of day and night like optional prayers, dhuha prayers, night prayers, prayer after ablution, doing the athkar after each prayer, the athkar of day and night and other deeds.
- ✓ Waking up well before prayer (obligatory or optional) to prepare for it so that you perform it with greater khushua/humility.
- ✓ Doing more extra worships and moving from worship to another to avoid feelings of boredom.
- ✓ Taking some books of knowledge specially books of tafseer which will help in reflecting on Quran.
- ✓ Getting used to less food, speech and sleep as that is beneficial to achieve softness of the heart, humility of the soul and improving time management.
- ✓ Preserving purity (taharah) during your time in I'tikaf.
- ✓ The people who perform I'tikaf should advise each other to truth and patience, cooperate in righteousness and piety and accept advice from each other.

May God guide us to whatever pleases him.