

# Zakātu-l Fiṭr

## 1. Its Ruling (*ḥukm*)

Ibn ‘Umar (May Allah be pleased with him!) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ made *zakāt-ul fiṭr* compulsory (*farḍ*) [in Ramaḍān upon the people]” Reported by Abū Dāwūd).

## 2. Who Pays It?

Scholars differ. Some of them claim that *zakāt-ul fiṭr* (or *ṣadaqat-ul fiṭr*) is compulsory upon the young and the old, the male and the female, and the free person and the slave. Their proof is the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Umar (May Allah be pleased with him!) who narrated that “the Messenger of Allah ﷺ made *zakāt-ul fiṭr* compulsory—a *ṣā‘* (an explanation of *ṣā‘* is given at the end of this article) of dates or barley—upon the slave, the free person, the male and the female, and the young and old from among the Muslims” (Reported by he addressed some women among whom were a few of his wives: “*Is it not that a menstruating woman does not pray or fast?*” They replied, “Yes!” (Reported Al-Bukhāri).

Others claim that *zakāt-ul fiṭr* is not compulsory on anyone except the fasting person based on the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Abbās (May Allah be pleased with him!): “the Messenger of Allah ﷺ made *zakāt-ul fiṭr* compulsory as purification for the fasting person from foolish

talk and obscenities and a feeding for the poor people” (Reported by Abū Dāwūd).

Yet others claim that *zakāt-ul fiṭr* is also compulsory on the fetus! There is absolutely no proof for that.

## 3. Is Zakāt-ul fiṭr paid in cash or kind?

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudri (May Allah be pleased with him!), a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ, narrated, “We used to pay *zakāt-ul fiṭr*—one *ṣā‘* of food (like flour, rice, and the like) or one *ṣā‘* of dried dates or one *ṣā‘* of *aqit* (a type of cheese) or one *ṣā‘* of raisins” (Reported by al-Bukhāri).

There is no harm, however, in paying *zakāt-ul fiṭr* in cash in light of the

## 4. Who Receives Zakāt-ul fiṭr?

It is given generally to the poor in the community based on the aforementioned *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Abbās (May Allah be pleased with him!) and not specifically the beneficiaries of al-Zakāh proper, as some scholars have opined.

## 5. When is Zakāt-ul fiṭr paid?

One should be paid before going out to the ‘Eid prayer, as reported by Abū Dāwūd and others. It is not recommended to delay its payment after the Eid Prayer or before it by a day or two: “Whosoever pays it (*zakāt-*

*ul fiṭr*) before *Ṣalāt-ul ‘Eīd*, it is an accepted *zakāh*; and whosoever pays it after *Ṣalāt-ul ‘Eīd*, it is an ordinary *ṣadaqah* The (Reported by Ibn Mājah).

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A *ṣā‘* is equivalent to 2.751 kgs or 3.8 kgs (based on the Medinite and Syrian dry measurements during the time of the Prophet ﷺ).

For who wish to *zakāt-ul fiṭr* in kind, I recommend a *ṣā‘* calculation of 3 kgs (6.6 lbs), which sails a middle course between the Medinite and Syrian measurements. Thus, Muslims who are required to pay *zakāt-ul fiṭr* can purchase 3 kgs (6.6 lbs) of rice, flour, split peas, macaroni, in other words, the staple food items of our local diet, and give to the poor directly or through their mosques.