

# *All About* **Ramadan**



*All a Muslim Needs to Know about the Rulings  
and Merits of Fasting, Zakatul-Fitr, I'tikaf, Laylat  
al-Qadr, and 'Eidul-Fitr*



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **INTRODUCTION..... 5**

### **CHAPTER ONE: Fasting: Morals and Rulings 7**

1. What is fasting? ..... 8
2. Lessons and moralities of fasting..... 8
3. Who should fast? .....12
4. Those exempted from fasting .....12
5. Requirements for the validity of fasting .....13
6. *Sunnan* (desirable acts) of fasting .....13
7. What invalidates the fast? .....14
8. Acts which do not invalidate the fast.....14
9. Types of fasting .....15

### **CHAPTER TWO: *I`tikaf* and *Laylatul-Qadr* . 17**

1. Merits and Rulings of *I`tikaf* .....18
2. Women and *I`tikaf* .....19
3. Seeking *Laylatul-Qadr* .....20
4. Menstruating Women and *Laylatul-Qadr*....22

### **CHAPTER THREE: *Zakatul-Fitr*: Significance and Rulings..... 23**

1. Who Should Pay *Zakatul-Fitr*? .....24
2. Significance of *Zakatul-Fitr* .....24
3. Time of *Zakatul-Fitr*.....25

4. The amount of <i>Zakatul-Fitr</i> .....	26
5. The recipients of <i>Zakatul-Fitr</i> .....	26
6. The place in which <i>Zakatul-Fitr</i> is paid .....	26
7. Should the Muslim pay <i>Zakatul-Fitr</i> for his non-Muslim wife? .....	27
8. Paying the monetary value of <i>Zakatul-Fitr</i> .	29

## **CHAPTER FOUR: `Eid Al-Fitr: Etiquette and Rulings..... 35**

1. Significance of `Eid Al-Fitr.....	36
2. Rulings of `Eid .....	38
3. Etiquette of `Eid .....	40

## INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah. We thank Him, the Most High, and seek His Help and Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evils within ourselves and that of our bad deeds. He whom Allah guides, is truly guided, and whom Allah leaves to stray, none can guide him. We bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His final Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). We ask Allah to bless our Prophet Muhammad, his family, his Companions, and all his followers, from the beginning of his call to the Day of Judgment.

Ramadan is a month of discipline, self-control, patience, and inculcating good behavior. In Ramadan, Muslims are expected to gain the fruits of Fasting; namely piety and being conscious of Allah. In this context, Allah, Most High, says in the Glorious Qur'an,

*[O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may ward off evil.]*

(Al-Baqarah 2: 183)

To attain God-conscience and the great reward of Allah in Ramadan, a Muslim needs to make himself or herself well-acquainted with the rulings of

Fasting, *Zakatul-Fitr*, *I'tikaf*, *Laylat al-Qadr*, and *`Eidul-Fitr*. He or she should also learn the morals and lessons of Ramadan.

OnIslam.net, therefore, produces this book, whose contents are based mainly on *fatwas* provided by eminent Muftis and scholars, in addition to informative articles, to help Muslims, and even non-Muslims, understand the merits, significance, and rulings of Ramadan and fasting.

We ask Allah Almighty to guide us all to what is best in this world and in the Hereafter, amen.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Fasting Morals and Rulings**

- **What is fasting?**
- **Lessons and moralities of fasting**
- **Who should fast?**
- **Those exempted from fasting**
- **Requirements for the validity of fasting**
- ***Sunnan* (desirable acts) of the fast**
- **What invalidates the fast**
- **Acts which do not invalidate the fast.**
- **Types of fasts**

## 1. What is fasting?

Literally, the word “*sawm/siyam*” means to abstain or refrain from something. Technically, it means to refrain from food, drink, sexual intercourse, and all that which breaks the fast from dawn to sunset, intending to do so in obedience to Allah.

## 2. Lessons and moralities of fasting

Allah, Most High, says,

*[Blessed be He in whose hand is the Sovereignty, and He is able to do all things. He created death and life that He may try which of you is best in deed. He is the Exalted in Might, oft Forgiving.]*

(Al-Mulk 67: 1-2)

Also, He says,

*[It is He who made the night and day follow each other for such as have the will to celebrate His praises or to show their gratitude.]*

(Al-Furqan 25: 62)

Life and death and the succession of the night and day have a purpose, and that is to test us and to give us an opportunity to express our thanks and gratitude to our Creator and

Sustainer. The month of Ramadan comes and goes. We must examine ourselves and see what we can learn and achieve during this month. The test of success of this month lies in the effects it leaves upon us, as follows:

### **a) Discipline**

We learn in this month how to discipline ourselves for the sake of Allah. In the morning and evening, we follow a strict schedule of eating and drinking. We are constantly aware that even in such mundane activities as eating and drinking, we must remain under divine injunctions. We change our habits in our daily routine because we learn that we are not the servants and slaves to our habits, but always the servants of Allah. Then after Ramadan, we should keep this spirit of discipline in other modes of our life and must continue with our submission to the commands of Allah.

### **b) Renewal of Devotional Life**

Ramadan renews our enthusiasm to worship and be devoted to Allah. In this month we are more careful of our daily prayers and perform special prayers at night. There is no religion without prayer and Muslims learn in this month how to strengthen and deepen their religious life.

### **c) Renewal of Our Contact with the Qur'an**

Ramadan and the Qur'an are linked together from the beginning. It was in this month that this

divine message was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Fasting prepares the believers' hearts to learn the Word of Allah. It is the most suitable condition for our spiritual and mental communication with the Qur'an. The Muslim *Ummah* (nation) pays more attention to the Qur'an in this month. This renewed contact with the Qur'an helps us to follow its message.

#### **d) Renewal of Our Identity with the *Ummah***

Ramadan is not only an individual experience, but it is a community experience as well. The whole Muslim *Ummah* fasts together in one and the same month. We identify with one another in our obedience to Allah. This gives us a new sense of togetherness and association. Ramadan teaches us that the Muslim *Ummah* is the community of piety and being devoted to Allah and its members derive their strength from each other through deeds of piety and virtue. The bonds that are based on piety and virtue are the strongest bonds and it is these bonds that prove good for mankind. The strength of the Muslim community lies in its commitment to the values of goodness, morality and piety. Ramadan leaves an imprint of all these values upon the Muslim *Ummah*.

#### **e) A Fresh Sense of Care and Sympathy**

Fasting in the month of Ramadan helps us to understand the suffering and the pains of the poor

and needy. By our voluntary hunger and thirst we realize what it means to be deprived of the basic necessities of life. Ramadan is called the month of charity and sympathy. We learn how to be more kind and generous in this month. Many Muslims also pay their *Zakah* in the month of Ramadan.

#### **f) Jihad or Struggle**

Fasting in Ramadan and Jihad, both of them, were prescribed in the same year, that is, the second year of Hijrah in Madinah. Fasting prepares one for hardships and sacrifice. These are two important points without which Jihad is not possible. Muslims learn in Ramadan how to struggle against the forces of evil in their own selves, in the society around them, and in the world at large.

#### **g) Taqwa**

To summarize all the moral and spiritual gifts of Ramadan, we can say that Ramadan gives us the great gift of *taqwa* (piety). *Taqwa* is the overall result of an Islamic life. It is the highest virtue in Islam. It means God-consciousness, piety, fear and awe of Allah and it signifies submission to Allah and total commitment to all that is good, and rejection of all that is evil and bad.

### 3. Who should fast?

Fasting during the month of Ramadan is obligatory upon every Muslim, male or female, who fulfills these specifications:

- a) To be mentally and physically fit, which means to be sane and able.
- b) To be of full age, the age of puberty and discretion, which is normally about fourteen. Children under this age should be encouraged to fast.
- c) To be resident, not to be traveling (on a journey of about 50 miles or more).
- d) In case of women, to be free from menses (*hayd*) and post-birth bleeding (*nifas*).

### 4. Those exempted from fasting

- a) The insane
- b) Children under the age of puberty
- c) The elderly and the chronically ill for whom fasting is unbearable. A person, in this category, is required to feed one poor person for every day he does not fast in Ramadan.
- d) Pregnant women and nursing mothers who fear that fasting may endanger their lives or health, or those of their fetuses or babies. According to Malik, she is treated like those in category C above. According to Abu Hanifah,

she should make up for the days she does not fast later.

- e) People in the course of traveling. They should make up for the days they do not fast later.
- f) Women during the period of menstruation or post-child birth confinement. They should make up for the days they do not fast later.

## **5. Requirements for the validity of fasting**

- a) Abstaining from food, drink, smoking, and sexual intercourse with one's wife from dawn to sunset each day in Ramadan.
- b) Having the correct intention, i.e., intending to fast the month of Ramadan in compliance with Allah's command.

## **6. *Sunnan* (desirable acts) of fasting**

- a) To take a night meal (*Suhoor*) as close to the time of Fajr as possible.
- b) To break the fast as soon as one is sure that the sun has set.
- c) To say the *du`aa'* that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to say at *Iftar* (the time one breaks one's fast).
- d) To avoid any act that is contradictory to fasting.

- e) To do good deeds: give charity, *tarawih*, Qur'an, *dhikr*, etc.

## 7. What invalidates the fast?

**First:** What breaks the fast and requires only *qada'* (making up for the days one did not fast in Ramadan)

- a) Eating or drinking
- b) Deliberately causing one's self to vomit
- c) The onset of menstruation or post delivery bleeding
- d) Ejaculation for reasons other than sexual intercourse or wet dreams

**Second:** what breaks the fast and requires *qada'* and *kaffarah*:

Sexual intercourse; it breaks the fast, and requires *qada'* and *kaffarah*, which is to set a slave free; if a slave is not available, he must fast for two continuous months. If he is not able to do this, then he must feed 60 persons one average-sized meal each.

## 8. Acts which do not invalidate the fast

- a) Bathing
- b) Wearing *Kuhl*
- c) Kissing one's wife or husband if he/she is able to control himself/herself

- d) Rinsing: rinsing the mouth or nostrils with water provided that it is not overdone
- e) Swallowing unavoidable things such as one's saliva
- f) Tasting food
- g) Taking injections
- h) Smelling flowers or wearing perfumes, etc.
- i) Experiencing a wet dream
- j) Eating or drinking due to forgetfulness
- k) Involuntarily vomiting.

## 9. Types of fasting

**First:** Obligatory: That is the fasting of the month of Ramadan.

**Second:** Forbidden:

- a) Fasting on *`Eidul-Fitr* or *`Eidul-Adha*
- b) Fasting the days of Tashreeq: 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> days of *`Eidul-Adha*
- c) The wife's optional fast in the presence of her husband without his consent

**Third:** Desirable Fasting

- a) Fasting 6 days during the month of Shawwal
- b) Fasting the day of *`Arafah*, 9<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijjah, provided that the person is not offering Hajj

- c) Fasting the 10<sup>th</sup> of Muhrram, and if possible the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 11th of the same month as well
- d) Fasting as many days as possible during the month of Sha`ban
- e) Fasting during the months of Ragab, Dhul Qi`dah, Dhul Hijjah
- f) Fasting on Mondays and Thursdays
- g) Fasting the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> of every lunar month



## CHAPTER TWO

### I`tikaf and Laylatul-Qadr

- **Merits and rulings of *I`tikaf*?**
- **Women and *I`tikaf***
- **Seeking *Laylatul-Qadr***
- **Menstruating women and *Laylatul-Qadr***

## 1. Merits and Rulings of *I'tikaf*

*I'tikaf* in the last ten days of Ramadan in the *Masjid* (mosque) is a beautiful tradition of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). It is like a spiritual retreat. It has been reported by `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to observe *I'tikaf* during the last ten days of the month of Ramadan and that he continued this practice until his death. After him, his wives regularly carried on this practice of observing *I'tikaf*. (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

It is recommended for every Muslim to make at least one *I'tikaf* in his/her life. There must be at least a few people who perform it in every *Masjid* in every community every year so as to keep this tradition alive. Men should do *I'tikaf* in the *Masjid* so that they can pray in *Jama'ah* (congregation) and also offer the Friday prayers. Women can also do *I'tikaf*. There is a great blessing in *I'tikaf* and people who do it bring blessings upon themselves, upon their families, and upon the Muslim community at large.

The *Sunnah* of *I'tikaf* is that one begins his *I'tikaf* on the evening of the 20<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan at sunset time and intends to continue until the sighting of the moon for *`Edu'l-Fitr*. During *I'tikaf* men should stay in the *Masjid* day and night, and should not leave it except to use the toilet or shower. They are also allowed to eat inside the

*Masjid*, but if it is not convenient they may go outside to eat and come back as soon as they finish.

During *I'tikaf* one should spend most of one's time in prayer, reading the Qur'an, *dhikr*, and reflection. Engaging in business and other worldly conversation and activities is not allowed during *I'tikaf*. However, attending a *Janazah* (Funeral), visiting a sick person or leaving for any emergency is permissible.

## 2. Women and *I'tikaf*

It is permissible for women to perform *I'tikaf* in the mosque — provided they have special arrangements for them to do so. Most of the mosques, however, do not have adequate facilities for women. Sadly enough, we find women often being relegated to a dark room or crowded corner, which is indeed a disgrace to womanhood. It is undoubtedly against the teachings of our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), as he always ordered us to treat them with respect and dignity.

So until proper arrangements are made for women to observe the *Sunnah* of *I'tikaf* in the mosque, it is better that they do it in their own homes. For, as scholars and jurists such as Imam Abu Hanifah have ruled, women may perform the *Sunnah* of *I'tikaf* in their own *Musalla* (prayer-place) at home.

Women, however, need not despair; they should recall an important point raised by Imam Shah Waliullah in his study of the philosophy of *Shari`ah*. He says that the *Shari`ah* is based on a fine principle of compensation, which allows a person who cannot do a certain act of worship to reap the same reward by doing what is within his/her ability, according to his/her circumstances or means. This is because of the fact that the *Shari`ah* is based on the infinite mercy of Allah, Who dispenses His graces freely to all of His servants.

### **3. Seeking Laylatul-Qadr**

*Laylat Al-Qadr* is the most virtuous night in the year. Almighty Allah says in the Qur'an:

*[We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Power: And what will explain to thee what the night of power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.]*

(Al-Qadr 97: 1-3)

Thus, every Muslim should strive hard not to miss the opportunity of obtaining multiple rewards in these blessed days. One should draw nearer and nearer to Allah to get the blessings of *Laylat Al-Qadr* in the last third of Ramadan.

Imam Ahmad and Muslim narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) used to strive harder in worship during the

last ten days of Ramadan than he ever did at any other time; praying, reciting the Qur'an, and making *du`aa'*. Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated from `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that when the last ten days of Ramadan came, the Prophet (peace and blessings of be upon him) would stay up at night and also wake his family up, and would abstain from marital relations.

Moreover, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) enjoined staying up and praying during *Laylat Al-Qadr* out of faith and in the hope of reward. It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said,

*"Whoever stays up and prays during Laylat Al-Qadr out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven."*

(Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

The previous *hadith* indicates that it is prescribed to observe *Laylat Al-Qadr* by spending the night in Prayer.

One of the best supplications that may be recited on *Laylat Al-Qadr* is that which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) taught to `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her). At-Tirmidhi narrated, classing the report as authentic, that `A'ishah said,

"I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, if I know which night is *Laylat Al-Qadr*, what should I say on that night?' He said, 'Say: *Allaahumma innaka `afuwwun tuhibb al-`afwa fa`affu `anni* (O Allah, You are forgiving and You love forgiveness, so forgive me).'"

With regard to specifying which night of Ramadan is *Laylat Al-Qadr*, there is no clear-cut evidence for this, but the odd-numbered nights during the last ten nights are more likely than others, and the night of the 27<sup>th</sup> is the most likely to be *Laylat Al-Qadr* because it is mentioned in the Prophetic *hadiths*.

#### **4. Menstruating women and *Laylatul-Qadr***

A menstruating woman should not perform *Salah* (prayer) nor touch the Qur'an, but she can make *du`aa*' (supplication) and share with other Muslims their prayer by watching and listening to TV channels or radio stations that broadcast *Tarawih* prayer live.

She can ask someone to put the *Mushaf* on a table or a stand, and read from it without touching it. She can also listen to Qur'anic recitations.



## CHAPTER THREE

### ***Zakatul-Fitr Significance and Rulings***

- **Who should pay *Zakaul-Fitr*?**
- **Significance of *Zakatul-Fitr***
- **Time of *Zakatul-Fitr***
- **The amount of *Zakatul-Fitr***
- **The recipients of *Zakatul-Fitr***
- **The place in which *Zakatul-Fitr* is paid**
- **Should the Muslim pay *Zakatul-Fitr* for his non-Muslim wife?**
- **Paying the monetary value of *Zakatul-Fitr***

## 1. Who Should Pay *Zakatul-Fitr*?

*Zakatul-Fitr* is incumbent on every free Muslim who possesses one *Sa`* (2.176 kilograms or 4.797 pounds) of dates or barley over and above his basic needs of food for himself and his family/dependants for the duration of one day and night. Every free Muslim must pay *Zakatul-Fitr* for himself, his wife, children, and servants.

Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, said,

"The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, enjoined the payment of one *Sa`* of dates or one *Sa`* of barley as *Zakatul-Fitr* on every Muslim, young and old, male and female, free and slave."

(Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

## 2. Significance of *Zakatul-Fitr*

*Zakatul-Fitr* was declared by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as a requisite for one's fast to be accepted. It is meant to cement the relationship between the members of the Muslim society, to alleviate the pains of the poor, to cultivate the sense of brotherhood and solidarity in the hearts of the Muslims, etc.

Various reasons are given by scholars for this obligatory charity. Some say that this charity

helps the poor and needy, and takes care of their needs in the month of Ramadan and also makes it possible for them to celebrate the `Eid festival with other Muslims. Other scholars maintain that this charity is meant to expiate (*Kaffarah*) for any mistakes or wrongdoings a person may have done during this blessed month. Ibn `Abbas said,

"The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) enjoined *Zakatul-Fitr* so that those who fast are purified of their sins and the poor and needy are fed. Therefore, whoever gives it before the `Eid prayer, it will be counted for him as an acceptable *Zakah (of al-Fitr)*, but if someone delays and gives it afterwards, his charity will be an ordinary one."

(Reported by Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah)

### 3. Time of Zakatul-Fitr

This charity should be given during the month of Ramadan, anytime before the `Eid-ul-Fitr prayer. Because it can be given anytime until the time of `Eid-ul-Fitr, it is called *Zakatul-Fitr*. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) urged Muslims to pay this charity in the month of Ramadan.

#### **4. The amount of *Zakatul-Fitr***

The amount of *Zakat-ul-Fitr* was fixed by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). It is about 5 pounds of wheat, flour, barley, dates or raisins. Some jurists also allow paying cash to the poor and needy. The head of the household must pay this amount on behalf of all the members of the household or his dependants; males or females, adults or children.

#### **5. The recipients of *Zakatul-Fitr***

This *Sadaqah* should be given to the poor and needy. Individuals can also make the payments to Islamic charitable organizations that collect this fund. These organizations then should distribute these funds as soon as possible so that they reach the needy people on time.

#### **6. The place in which *Zakatul-Fitr* is paid**

It is better to pay *Zakatul-Fitr* in the place one lives and fasts. However, if someone fasts in a country other than his home town, he should pay *Zakatul-Fitr* therein, this is the position of the Hanbalis and Shafi`is, because *Zakatul-Fitr* relates to where one is resident (during the fast).

As for sending *Zakah* from one country to another, it is permissible if there is a strong enough reason: The country where he lives is in no need of *Zakah*; another country is in dire need because of starvation, calamity, or war; or the

payer has some relatives in another country who need his help. These reasons permit the Muslims to send their *Zakah* to the poor Muslims who are resisting aggressors or suffering from starvation and calamities, as in Palestine, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Bangladesh, Burma, etc.

## **7. Should the Muslim pay *Zakatul-Fitr* for his non-Muslim wife?**

It is very important to note that a Muslim husband does not need to pay *Zakatul-Fitr* on behalf of his non-Muslim wife, according to the majority of Muslim scholars. On the other hand, Abu Hanifah and his followers see that a man in this case is obliged to pay *Zakatul-Fitr* on behalf of his non-Muslim wife.

**Sheikh `Atiyyah Saqr**, former head of Al-Azhar Fatwa Committee, stated the following:

"*Zakatul-Fitr* is to be paid by the head of the household for himself and for those he is obliged to maintain, i.e., his family members including his wife. Although all Muslim scholars agree that a man is obliged to sustain his non-Muslim wife, they differ concerning paying *Zakatul-Fitr* for her.

The majority of scholars, including Malik, Ash-Shafi'i and Ahmad, maintain that a man is not obliged to pay *Zakatul-Fitr* for his non-Muslim wife, as she herself is not required to pay it because she is outside the boundaries of Islam. They base their opinion on the view that implies

that a non-Muslim is not charged to perform the rules of *Shari`ah*. It is, moreover, reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) prescribed *Zakatul-Fitr* on all Muslims, free and enslaved; male and female; young and old. Also, *Zakatul-Fitr* is considered a way to purify the fasting person from lewdness and abuse, as reported by Abu Dawud with a sound chain of transmitters, on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both). Hence, it is meaningless to demand non-Muslims to pay *Zakatul-Fitr*, as they are not required to observe fast, like the Muslims.

The fore mentioned *hadith* restricts prescribing *Zakatul-Fitr* to Muslims. In the *hadith*, the word 'Muslims' refers to the persons on whose behalf *Zakah* is paid, not the person who pays it. Therefore, it is not necessary for a man to pay *Zakatul-Fitr* on behalf of his non-Muslim slave, even though he is obliged to maintain him. The same ruling applies to a non-Muslim wife. (Ibn Qudamah; *Al-Mughni*; vol. 2, pp. 646-647)

Abu Hanifah and other scholars maintain that a Muslim has to pay *Zakatul-Fitr* on behalf of his young son who apostatizes from Islam, because one is not accountable for apostasy unless he fulfills the conditions of legal accountability that include adulthood. They also opine that a man should pay *Zakatul-Fitr* on behalf of his Christian or Jewish slave. They base their view on the fact that a father is obliged to maintain his young son,

and a master his slave. They cite a *hadith* from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in which he said, "Pay half a *Sa`* of barley (one *Sa`* = 2.176 kilograms or 4.797 pounds) on behalf of everyone, free or slave; young or old; Jew, Christian or pagan." However, the majority of scholars have refuted this *hadith*, saying that it is not reported in the well-known books of Hadith.

Some argue that *Zakatul-Fitr* purifies the fasting person from any lewdness or abuse he committed while fasting, and is, thus, not paid on behalf of non-Muslim family members due to the fact that they do not fast. However, it is paid in favor of the needy on behalf of those who are excused from fasting. Hence, a non-Muslim wife or slave is in the same position as the excused.

This claim is also refuted by the fact that if a Muslim does not observe fasting in Ramadan without a valid excuse, he will be charged with two things; to make up for the fast and to pay *Zakahul-Fitr*. Neither of the two replaces the other."

## 8. Paying the monetary value of *Zakatul-Fitr*

On the legitimacy of paying *Zakatul-Fitr* in cash, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradwi said,

**"First:** Imam Abu Hanifah and his companions, Al-Hasan Al-Basri, Sufyan Ath-Thawri, Caliph

`Umar ibn `Abd Al-`Aziz, and many other scholars permitted paying the value of *Zakah*, including *Zakatul-Fitr*, as money. Both supporters and opponents of the opinion depended on many pieces of evidence and points of views. I have detailed this matter in my book *Fiqh Az-Zakah*, in a chapter on paying the monetary value when giving *Zakah*.

Sheikh Ibn Taymiyah reached an opinion that is considered a compromise between these two parties, "Paying the value of *Zakah* in money when there is no need or interest in doing so, is impermissible... As for paying the value of *Zakah* as money because of a need or interest, it is permissible. For example, if a Muslim sells the fruits or the crops of his land for some dirhams, he can pay the tenth of these dirhams and he should not be asked to buy fruits or plants... Also, if he has five camels he is obliged to give a sheep as *Zakah*, but if he does not find a sheep to buy, he can pay the value in cash and he is not asked to travel to another city to buy a sheep. In addition, if those who deserve *Zakah* ask him to pay it as money because of some need, he can do so. It was narrated that Mu`adh Ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) said to the people of Yemen, "You can bring me *khamis* and *labis* (local textiles) instead of the actual plants and fruit, for this will make matters easy for you and will be more useful to the poor Muhajirun (immigrants) and Ansar (helpers) in Madinah." It was narrated that he said these words concerning *Zakah*, and it

was said they were concerning *Jizyah*." (*Majmu' Fatawa Ibn Taymiyah*, 25/82-83, Saudi edition)

The essence of disagreement is between two schools: One school considers the total objectives of *Shari'ah* without neglecting the specific texts, and another school considers only the specific texts.

The opinion that it is permissible to pay the value of *Zakatul-Fitr* as money was in effect during the age of the Tabi'in (the generation following the Companions) and was supported by many scholars and one of the caliphs. Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated on the authority of 'Awn, "I heard the letter of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Aziz being 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 in paying the value of *Zakatul-Fitr* in dirhams," that Abu Ishaq said, "I saw them paying the value of *Zakatul-Fitr* in dirhams", and that 'Ata' narrated, "I used to give the value of *Zakatul-Fitr* in silver dirhams. (*Musannaf*, 4/37-38) "

Actually, there is much evidence that supports this opinion:

- a) The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) said, "Enrich them (the poor) on this day." Enriching is achieved through food and also its value, which may even be better than food, as the poor person who has plenty of

food may be forced to sell some of it; whereas if the monetary value is given it will enable him to buy whatever he wants of food, clothes, etc.

- b) Ibn Al-Mundhir narrated that the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) permitted giving half a *Sa`* of wheat, as they believed that it equaled the value of a *Sa`* of dates or barley. Thus, Mu`awiyah (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I see that two *mudds* (a *mudd* equals a handful of an average-sized man) of the Levantine wheat equal a *Sa`* of dates."
- c) This opinion is easier for the Muslims in this age, especially for those who live in the industrialized countries where people deal only with money, and it brings great benefit in most cases for the poor in many cities.

**Second**, when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked Muslims to give *Zakatul-Fitr* from the common foodstuffs, he wanted to make matters easy for them; silver and gold money were rare means of dealings among the Arabs and the majority of people did not own but a few coins. Moreover, the poor were in dire need of the common foodstuffs, such as wheat, dates, raisins, and cheese. Thus, giving *Zakatul-Fitr* from the staple food was easy for the payer and beneficial for the recipient. Also, he (peace and blessings be upon him) permitted the owners

of camels and sheep to give cheese as *Zakatul-Fitr* in order to facilitate matters for them.

Furthermore, the purchasing power of money varies from one time to another and from one country to another. Thus, estimating the amount of *Zakatul-Fitr* by a fixed amount of money would make it fluctuate and be unstable. That is why the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) fixed it by an amount that does not vary or fluctuate. This amount is the *Sa`*, which is usually considered as sufficient food for one family for a day.

**Third**, our scholars agreed that *fatwas* change according to the time, place, and condition of the people involved. The one who impartially examines the current status will realize that giving food as *Zakatul-Fitr* is only suitable for simple societies in which the poor need grains and the payer finds such grains easily. In the large and complex societies that have a high population density and where grains are rare and the poor do not need them, as they no longer grind, knead, and bake their food, the impartial will agree that paying the value of *Zakatul-Fitr* as money is more suitable.

Imam Ibn Taymiyah did well when he permitted the Muslim who had sold the fruits of his land for some dirhams to pay the tenth of these dirhams and not to be asked to buy fruits to just to give them to the poor. Also, he permitted the owner of the camels who was obliged to give

a sheep as *Zakah* to pay the value in money and did not ask him to travel to another city to buy a sheep. This is true *fiqh* (understanding of *Shari`ah*). Then how can we ask a Muslim in a city like Cairo, where more than 10 million Muslims live, to give grain that has become rare and is of no need to the poor as *Zakatul-Fitr*?

There is a big difference between the one who has a stock of food and refrains from giving the poor and the one like a city dweller who has nothing but money and is just to the poor. *Zakatul-Fitr* was made obligatory in order to help the poor and make them not need to go from one place to another seeking food on the day of `Eid while the rich enjoy their wealth with their children. One should ask oneself, "Would he make a poor person not need to go to the market if he gives him a *Sa`* of dates or barley in a city like Cairo, for example?" Of course not, as the poor will surely go to market to sell them to obtain money to buy suitable food for their families! Thus, some of the Muslim scholars took into consideration the objectives involved and permitted giving *Zakatul-Fitr* from the common foodstuffs of the country; this food is not even listed in the *Shari`ah*."



## CHAPTER FOUR

### *`Eid Al-Fitr* **Etiquette and Rulings**

- **Significance of *`Eid Al-Fitr***
- **Rulings of *`Eid***
- **Etiquette of *`Eid***

## 1. Significance of *`Eid Al-Fitr*

*`Eid Al-Fitr* is the day of boons and blessings for all fasting Muslims, as they are promised a great reward by Almighty Allah for their righteous observance of the fast. At the end of Ramadan, Muslims express their gratitude to Allah, Who enabled them to observe the fast and, at the same time, granted them abundant provision during this blessed month. *`Eid Al-Fitr*, therefore, is a day of joy, acts of worship, thanksgiving to Allah, cooperation, solidarity, brotherhood, unity, and spiritual provision.

Shedding more light on this issue, the late **Sheikh Sayyed Ad-Darsh**, former Chairman of the UK *Shari`ah* Council, said:

"True joy is our *`Eid*; it is our feast. During the month of Ramadan, Allah puts us through a test. At the end of the month there is a great sense of achievement, of coming closer to the Almighty. It is the joy of spiritual fulfillment. It is a time for celebration, not a time to indulge in insulting or abusing others or detracting from the achievements of the month of Ramadan; it's a day of real happiness and joy.

When Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) entered the house of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) on the day of *`Eid*, he found two young girls playing music and singing. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) asked them, "You are doing this in the house of the

Prophet, how come?" But the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) told Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) to leave them, for *`Eid* is a day of merriment and joy.

It is important for us to let our young and our neighbors understand that our religion is not boring and just a matter of prohibitions. We must show that Islam is the way of moderation, of tolerance, and of beauty, sharing and laughter on the appropriate occasion.

However, *`Eid* is not simply a matter of celebration and joy. It is also a chance to share the feelings of those around us. That is why the sacrifice is offered and shared with friends, even with non-Muslims. There is no law that stops us from sharing gifts with those of our neighbors who are non-Muslim. Charity is very important and meritorious on the two *`Eids*. It is an affirmation of our responsibility to the community in which we are living."

Moreover, **Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqi**, President of the Fiqh Council of North America, stated:

"At the conclusion of the month of Ramadan, on the first day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month of the Islamic lunar calendar occurs *`Eid Al-Fitr*. This is one of two main festivals of Islam and is celebrated by all Muslims throughout the world.

The ceremony of *`Eid Al-Fitr* starts early in the morning with collective worship. This service is

generally held in a large open place and is attended by thousands of Muslims. After the Prayer the leader of the Prayer (Imam) delivers a short sermon and then people greet each other. The rest of the ceremonies are generally held privately with families and friends.

The significance of *`Eid Al-Fitr* is that it is a day of thanksgiving to Allah for giving the opportunity to the Muslims to benefit from and enjoy the blessings of the month of Ramadan."

## 2. Rulings of *`Eid*

Elaborating on the rulings of *`Eid*, **Sheikh M. S. Al-Munajjid**, a prominent Saudi Islamic lecturer and author, stated:

- a) Fasting: It is *haram* (prohibited) to fast on the days of *`Eid* because of the *hadith* of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) in which he said that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) prohibited fasting on the day of *Fitr* and the day of *Adha*. (Reported by Muslim)
- b) Offering *`Eid* Prayers: Some of the scholars say that *`Eid* prayers are *Wajib* (obligatory) – this is the view of the Hanafi scholars and of Sheikh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah. Some scholars say that *`Eid* Prayer is *Fard Kifayah* (a communal duty, binding on the Muslims as a group, which is fulfilled if a sufficient number of people perform it, thereby absolving the

rest of sin). This is the view of the Hanbalis. A third group says that `Eid prayer is *Sunnah Mu'akkadah* (a *Sunnah* that the Prophet constantly performed) This is the view of the Malikis and Shafi`is.

- c) Offering Supererogatory Prayers: There are no Supererogatory prayers to be offered either before or after the `Eid prayer, as Ibn `Abbas reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to go out on the day of `Eid and pray two *Rak`ahs*, with nothing before or after them. This is the case if the prayer is offered in an open area. If, however, the people pray the `Eid prayer in a mosque, then they should pray two *Rak`ahs* for *Tahiyat Al-Masjid* (a way of greeting the mosque).
- d) Women attending the `Eid Prayers: According to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) everyone is urged to attend `Eid Prayer, and to co-operate with one another in righteousness and piety. The menstruating woman should not forsake the remembrance of Allah or places of goodness such as gatherings for the purpose of seeking knowledge and remembering Allah – apart from mosques. Women, of course, should not go out without a Hijab.”

### 3. Etiquette of `Eid

Elaborating on the etiquette of `Eid, **Sheikh M. S. Al-Munajjid**, stated:

- a) *Ghusl* (taking a bath): One of the good manners of `Eid is to take a bath before going out to the Prayer. It was reported that Sa`id ibn Jubayr said, "Three things are *Sunnah* on `Eid: to walk (to the prayer-place), to take a bath, and to eat before going out (if it is `Eidul-Fitr)."
- b) Eating before going out: One should not go out to the prayer-place on `Eidul-Fitr before eating some dates, because of the *hadith* narrated by Al-Bukhari from Anas ibn Malik who said, "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) would not go out in the morning of `Eidul-Fitr until he had eaten some dates... and he would eat an odd number." On `Eidul-Adha, on the other hand, it is *Mustahab* (recommended) not to eat until after the prayer, when one should eat from the meat of one's sacrifice.
- c) *Takbir* on the day of `Eid: This is one of the greatest *Sunnan* of this day. Al-Daraqutni and others reported that when Ibn `Umar went out on `Eidul-Fitr and `Eidul-Adha, he would constantly make *Takbir* until he reached the prayer-place, then he would continue making *Takbir* until the Imam came.

- d) Congratulating one another: People may exchange congratulations and good greetings on *`Eid*, no matter what form the words may take. For example they may say to one another, "*Taqabbal Allahu minnaa wa minkum* (may Allah accept from us and from you (our good deeds)!)". Jubayr ibn Nufayr said, "At the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) when people met one another on the day of *`Eid*, they would say, '*Taqabbal Allahu minnaa wa minka*'." (Reported by Ibn Hajar)
- e) Wearing one's best clothes for *`Eid*: Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) said,
- "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had a *Jubbah* (cloak) that he would wear on *`Eid* and on Fridays."

Al-Bayhaqi reported that Ibn `Umar used to wear his best clothes on *`Eid*, so men should wear the best clothes they have when they go out for *`Eid*.

Changing the route on returning from the prayer-place: Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to take different routes on the day of *`Eid* (going to and returning from the *`Eid* prayer). (Reported by Al-Bukhari)"

## ***Ramadan Mubarak!***

***(May you receive the Blessings of Ramadan!)***