

Zakat

Zakat is obligatory charity and is the third pillar of Islam. The word Zakat means to purify. According to the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), Muslims have to give 2.5 percent of their wealth to the poor and the needy yearly. By doing this Muslims are able to help people in difficult life conditions.

There are two types of Zakat, the first one being Zakat al-Mal and the second being Zakat al-Fitr, for the completion of fasting in Ramadan. Zakat al-Mal is a mandatory form of charity given to the poor and the needy, while Zakat al-Fitr is obligatory and should be given before Salat ul-Eid. Zakat al-Fitr is especially important right before Eid as it helps those who may not be able to find anything to eat in the morning of Eid. Zakat al-Fitr can be given in a form of staple food or cash money. The most common Zakat al-Mal assets on which zakat is calculated on are: money, gold and silver, underground oil, business assets, crops and live stocks.

Zakat can be given to eight different categories of people due to the situation they're living in. These eight categories are: the poor, the needy, Muslims administering Zakat's collection and distribution, those whose hearts are to be reconciled, those who are captives to set them free, people who are in debt, for the Cause of Allah (S.W.T), and travellers in needy circumstances.

When a Muslim gives Zakat, it provides the giver both worldly and spiritual blessings. It helps purify a person's soul and is a way to get rid of greedy habits. Zakat helps the poor and needy by improving their life conditions without having the need to beg. It benefits both sides because the person giving the money gets the thawaab (heavenly reward) while the person in poverty gains the money, getting him/her out of a difficult situation. Zakat also helps purify one's wealth, giving more barakah (blessing) to those who give. Finally, Zakat will make you want to help more people that are poor or in need and makes you close to Allah (S.W.T).

Another form of charity which is not Zakat is Sadaqa. It is the act of giving something without expecting something back in return and with the intention of pleasing Allah (S.W.T). Examples of Sadaqa are as follows: Acts of kindness, helping neighbors, aiding those who have suffered losses in disasters, moving rocks or fallen branches from the road, or even just smiling at strangers. Sadaqa removes your sins, cleanses you and will help you on the Day of Judgement. Allah (S.W.T) increases the wealth of those who give Sadaqa.

Sadaqa Jariya is another form of charity that benefits people after they pass away. Examples include: sponsoring an orphan, planting trees, building a well, donating a wheel chair in Makkah or Madina, or supporting a child with their education.

In conclusion, it is important to give Zakat as it is one of the pillars of Islam, it wipes away your sins and most importantly it helps the poor with financial support during difficult times. May Allah (S.W.T) help all those who are in need. Ameen.

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