



In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

Monthly Bulletin of International
Community of Submitters

www.masjiduntucson.org



Published by Masjid Tucson
Rabi I 1438

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The Obligatory Charity (Zakat)

[2:277] Those who believe and lead a righteous life, and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), they receive their recompense from their Lord; they will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

What is the Obligatory Charity (Zakat)? Why do Submitters (Muslims) give Zakat? How do we give Zakat? In this article we will be reflecting on these questions.

What is the Obligatory Charity (Zakat)?

Zakat is obligatory charity that we are commanded to give on any net income we receive. As Appendix 15 [1] indicates, "Government taxes should be deducted, but not other expenses such as debts, mortgages, and living expenses." Loans are not included since they need to be repaid.

[2:110] You shall observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat). Any good you send forth on behalf of your souls, you will find it at GOD. GOD is seer of everything you do.

Why do Submitters give Zakat?

Zakat is one of our main practices of worshipping God, Our Creator and Provider. In some of the verses it comes right after Salat.

*[98:5] All that was asked of them was to worship **GOD**, devoting the religion absolutely to Him alone, observe the contact prayers (Salat), and give the obligatory charity (Zakat). Such is the perfect religion.*

Giving Zakat is part of the criteria for being righteous (2:177, 31:2-4) and being a believer (23:4, 9:71, 27:2-3). Like other worship practices, it helps to strengthen and purify our soul (33:33, 11:114).

[30:44] Whoever disbelieves, disbelieves to the detriment of his own soul, while those who lead a righteous life, do so to strengthen and develop their own souls.

*[9:103-104] Take from their money a charity to purify them and sanctify them. ... Do they not realize that **GOD** accepts the repentance of His worshipers, and takes the charities, and that **GOD** is the Redeemer, Most Merciful?*

It seems to me that these verses (9:103-104) are linking charity to acceptance of repentance and redemption. Giving to charity helps remit our sins and helps us earn redemption. The above verses also indicate that charity can purify us. According to Wikipedia, "Zakat literally means 'that which purifies.'" [2] There are verses in the Quran which have a

word related to Zakat that means purify or something related to pure (2:129, 2:151, 3:164, 19:13, 20:76).

*[2:151] (Blessings) such as the sending of a messenger from among you to recite our revelations to you, **purify** you, teach you the scripture and wisdom, and to teach you what you never knew.*

*[19:13] And (we endowed him with) kindness from us and **purity**, for he was righteous.*

In verse 19:13, it seems that *zakatan* means purity. It seems that Zakat purifies our income and our soul.

Zakat also helps provide resources to those who need it and thus promotes social justice. It also seems that giving Zakat can be an act of compassion and kindness if done righteously (2:263-264).

*[24:22] Those among you who are blessed with resources and wealth shall be charitable towards their relatives, the poor, and those who have immigrated for the sake of **GOD**. They shall treat them with kindness and tolerance; do you not love to attain **GOD's** forgiveness? **GOD** is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

This is one of the verses where kindness is encouraged and it seems to me that being charitable is one form of kindness in that verse. It is also a reminder to give the charity in a kind manner.

Giving Zakat is also a way of showing our appreciation for God's blessings.

[108:1-2] *We have blessed you with many a bounty. Therefore, you shall pray to your Lord (Salat), and give to charity.*

The worship practices bond us as sisters and brothers in faith (9:11, 9:71, 5:55). Being a unified community of Submitters can help us be steadfast in our faith and strive in the cause of God at higher levels (3:104, 3:200).

[9:11] *If they repent and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), then they are your brethren in religion. We thus explain the revelations for people who know.*

[3:200] *O you who believe, you shall be steadfast, you shall persevere, you shall be united, you shall observe **GOD**, that you may succeed.*

The importance of Zakat is reflected in the following verse:

*Requirements For Attaining God's Mercy:
The Importance of Zakat*
[7:156] *"And decree for us righteousness in this world, and in the Hereafter. ... He said, "... **My mercy encompasses all things. However, I will specify it for those who** (1) **lead a righteous life,** (2) **give the obligatory charity (Zakat),*** (3) **believe in our revelations ..."***

*7:156 *The importance of the obligatory charity (Zakat) cannot be over emphasized. As instituted in 6:141, Zakat must be given away upon receiving any income—2.5% of one's net income must be given to the parents, the relatives, the orphans, the poor, and the traveling alien, in this order (see 2:215).*

Giving Zakat is part of the criteria for earning God's mercy as the following verses also show:

Formula for Success

[24:56] *You shall observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory*

*charity (Zakat), and obey the messenger, that you may **attain mercy.***

[9:71] *The believing men and women are allies of one another. They advocate righteousness and forbid evil, they observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and they obey **GOD** and His messenger. These will be **showered by GOD's mercy.** **GOD** is Almighty, Most Wise.*

It is a blessing to be able to give Zakat. The rewards are immense both in this life and in the Hereafter.

How do Submitters give Zakat?

All the worship practices, including Zakat, were passed down to us from Abraham (21:72-73, 22:78, 16:123). We know from the Quran that Jesus (19:31) and the Children of Israel were also enjoined to observe Zakat (2:83, 5:12).

The percentage that was passed down to us from Abraham was 2.5%. This was clarified for us by Dr. Rashad Khalifa, God's Messenger of the Covenant (Appendix 15).

Abraham: Delivered All Religious Duties of Islam

[21:73] *We made them imams who guided in accordance with our commandments, and we taught them how to work righteousness, and how to observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and the obligatory charity (Zakat). * To us, they were devoted worshippers.*

*21:73 *When the Quran was revealed, all religious duties were already established through Abraham (2:128, 16:123, 22:78).*

Who do we give zakat to?

Recipients of Charity

[2:215] *They ask you about giving: say, "The charity you give shall go to the parents, the relatives, the orphans, the poor, and the traveling alien." Any good you do, **GOD** is fully aware thereof.*

The verse above outlines the recipients of charity and Zakat is Obligatory Charity. This verse also specifies the order of giving. If someone does not know anyone in need, she or he may give Zakat to an organization or mosque with the purpose of helping poor people (Appendix 15).

When do we give zakat?

We are commanded to give Zakat on the day of harvest or the day we receive the provisions:

*Zakat Must Be Given "On The Day Of Harvest"**

[6:141] *He is the One who established gardens, trellised and untrellised, and palm trees, and crops with different tastes, and olives, and pomegranate — fruits that are similar, yet dissimilar. Eat from their fruits, and give the due alms on the day of harvest,* and do not waste anything. He does not love the wasters.*

*6:141 *Zakat charity is so important, the Most Merciful has restricted His mercy to those who give it (7:156). Yet, the corrupted Muslims have lost this most important commandment; they give Zakat only once a year. We see here that Zakat must be given away "On the day we receive income." The proportion that came to us through Abraham is 2.5% of our net income.*

God promises a great reward for those who follow His path. May we be among them.

[4:162] *As for those among them who are well founded in knowledge, and the believers, they believe in what was revealed to you, and in what was revealed before you. They are observers of the Contact Prayers (Salat), and givers of the obligatory charity (Zakat); they are believers in **GOD** and the Last Day. We grant these a great recompense.*

References

[1] Reference for verses, subtitles, footnotes and appendices: Quran: The Final Testament (Authorized English Version) translated by Dr. Rashad Khalifa

[2] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zakat>

Acknowledgement: Thanks to the Submitters who shared their input and understanding on this topic as this article was being written.

Farinaz

Charity

This issue focuses on charity. We know how very important charity (including the obligatory charity, Zakat) is in God's system.

[3:92] You cannot attain righteousness until you give to charity from the possessions you love. Whatever you give to charity, GOD is fully aware thereof.

[7:156] He said, "My retribution befalls whomever I will. But My mercy encompasses all things. However, I will specify it for those who (1) lead a righteous life, (2) give the obligatory charity (Zakat), (3) believe in our revelations..."

If humans were to follow the system that God has laid out for us, there would be no hunger and no poverty. Everyone would be taking care of one another. But we get waylaid and misled by Satan and all his temptations of worldly pleasures. People wrongly feel that hoarding material possessions is good for them (3:180), or think that helping others is not their problem (36:47). *[17:100] Proclaim, "If you possessed my Lord's treasures of mercy, you would have withheld them, fearing that you might exhaust them. The human being is stingy."*

While giving to charity is a blessing, there is such a thing as a wrong way to engage in charity. This month of December, especially in western cultures, can bring out those tendencies of extravagance more strongly than any other time. Giving is wonderful; it's strongly encouraged throughout the Quran, but the motivation behind it is as important to keep in mind. Some people have a need to outdo one another, to be "better" than their neighbor. Often a seemingly generous gift is nothing more than showing off (4:36-38). They want everyone to know that they can afford to give extravagantly. *[17:26-7] You shall give the due alms to the relatives, the needy, the poor, and the traveling alien, but do not be excessive, extravagant. The extravagant are brethren of the devils, and the devil is unappreciative of his Lord.*

[25:67] When they give, they are neither extravagant, nor stingy; they give in moderation.

God also does not approve of those who spend their energy unfairly criticizing or ridiculing others' charitable works (9:79).

We know that our gifts must be only toward pleasing God, not with the expectation even of a thank you (76:9). We're told it's better to give anonymously, if possible (2:271). We know that when we give, we do so with no strings attached, no condemnation or derision for the person receiving our charity (93:10, 51:19).

So, in this time of year, which has been touted as a time of peace and giving but which for some has been turned into a commercial nightmare, we, as submitters, need to always remember to be thankful to God (2:152) for all He has given us: *[93:11] You shall proclaim the blessing your Lord has bestowed upon you.*

We need to be generous and kind all year long, giving charity as a means of pleasing God and growing our souls. Let us always strive to follow the description of righteousness in the Quran:

[2:177] Righteousness is not turning your faces towards the east or the west. Righteous are those who believe in GOD, the Last Day, the angels, the scripture, and the prophets; and they give the money, cheerfully, to the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the traveling alien, the beggars, and to free the slaves; and they observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat); and they keep their word whenever they make a promise; and they steadfastly persevere in the face of persecution, hardship, and war. These are the truthful; these are the righteous.

And as we give, we pray we may be accepted by God among those He loves in this world and the Hereafter.

[3:133-4] You should eagerly race towards forgiveness from your Lord and a Paradise whose width encompasses the heavens and the earth; it awaits the righteous, who give to charity dur-

ing the good times, as well as the bad times. They are suppressors of anger, and pardoners of the people. GOD loves the charitable.

[2:274] Those who give to charity night and day, secretly and publicly, receive their recompense from their Lord; they will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

Editors

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Just a Note

To all the submitters, both local and around the world, who have made the Masjid Tucson food pantry program a success, we say May God bless you. Your food, clothes, money, and other donations have been very helpful to so many people by God's leave. This is a project God has permitted us to do, and we're thankful to be doing God's work. May He keep us always striving to do the things that please Him, especially to be charitable, as He has been charitable towards us.

[76:8-11] They donate their favorite food to the poor, the orphan, and the captive. "We feed you for the sake of GOD; we expect no reward from you, nor thanks. We fear from our Lord a day that is full of misery and trouble." Consequently, GOD protects them from the evils of that day, and rewards them with joy and contentment.

* * * * *

The Charitable

[57:7] Believe in GOD and His messenger, and give from what He has bestowed upon you. Those among you who believe and give (to charity) have deserved a great recompense.

[16:128] GOD is with those who lead a righteous life, and those who are charitable.

[92:5-7] As for him who gives to charity and maintains righteousness. And upholds the scripture. We will direct him towards happiness.

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ISSN 1089-053X

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Be included in our email list for weekly reminders

God has blessed us with the opportunity to send weekly reminders to submitters in our email list. The weekly reminder email is not very long. It usually consists of the topic of the week, and the corresponding Quranic verses and links to get more information from. The reminder is sent every Thursday, God willing.

[51:55] And remind, for the reminder benefits the believers.

We would like every submitter, whether receiving our newsletters or not, to be included in the list. God willing you can join the list by sending an email to info@masjiduntucson.org and saying that you want to be in the weekly reminder list. If you want to make it a really short email, write "weekly reminder" in the subject line and send it. Or join via: <http://masjiduntucson.org/current/weekly.html>

If you also include in the email the city and state that you live in, God willing we can compile this information and use it for the submitters without a community who are asking to communicate with other submitters in their area.

Please help us to help you and other submitters by joining the list and by being proactive, God willing.

[3:200] O you who believe, you shall be steadfast, you shall persevere, you shall be united, you shall observe GOD, that you may succeed.

[87:9] Therefore, you shall remind; perhaps the reminder will benefit.

Note: Your comments are also welcome and appreciated.