

In the name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the Ever-Merciful

Zakāt al-ḥiṭrah (The ḥiṭrah alms tax)

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى

Felicitous is one who purifies oneself. (Qur'an 87:14)

Introduction

It is reported on the authority of Imām al-Ṣādiq (as): “Indeed, one of the signs of the completion of fasting (the month of Ramaḍān) is to pay the zakāt i.e. ḥiṭrah; just as sending blessings upon the Prophet (pbuh) is one of the signs of the completion of ṣalāt. Indeed, whosoever fasts but does not pay zakāt al-ḥiṭrah, the fasting is not accepted when it is abandoned intentionally, and likewise, ṣalāt is not accepted if one abandons blessings upon the Prophet (pbuh), whereas Allah (swt) has mentioned zakāt before the ṣalāt. Allah (swt) says: Felicitous is one who purifies oneself and celebrates the name of the Lord and prays”.¹

It is an obligation on the believers to pay zakāt al-ḥiṭrah at the end of the holy month of Ramaḍān. This generous gesture ensures a radiant smile on the faces of needy fellow sisters and brothers and gives them an opportunity to cherish the celebration of ʿĪd (Eid). It also inspires us to continue making the needy ones our perpetual partners in the blessed wealth as long as their need exists. What counts is our Godly gesture of imitating Him in some of His sublime values. Imam Sajjād (as) has rightly put forth in the famous *duʿāʾ* entitled *Duʿāʾ Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī: The creation in its entirety is Your child*.² Therefore, by helping the needy, we are trying to demonstrate a Godly value.

¹ *Al-faqīh*, vol. 2, p. 183, hadith no. 2085

² *Duʿāʾ Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī*

Who is supposed to pay zakāt al-ḥiṭrah?³

Anyone who is *bāligh* has an obligation to pay *zakāt al-ḥiṭrah*. This person must also pay *ḥiṭrah* on behalf of all the dependents.

NOTES:

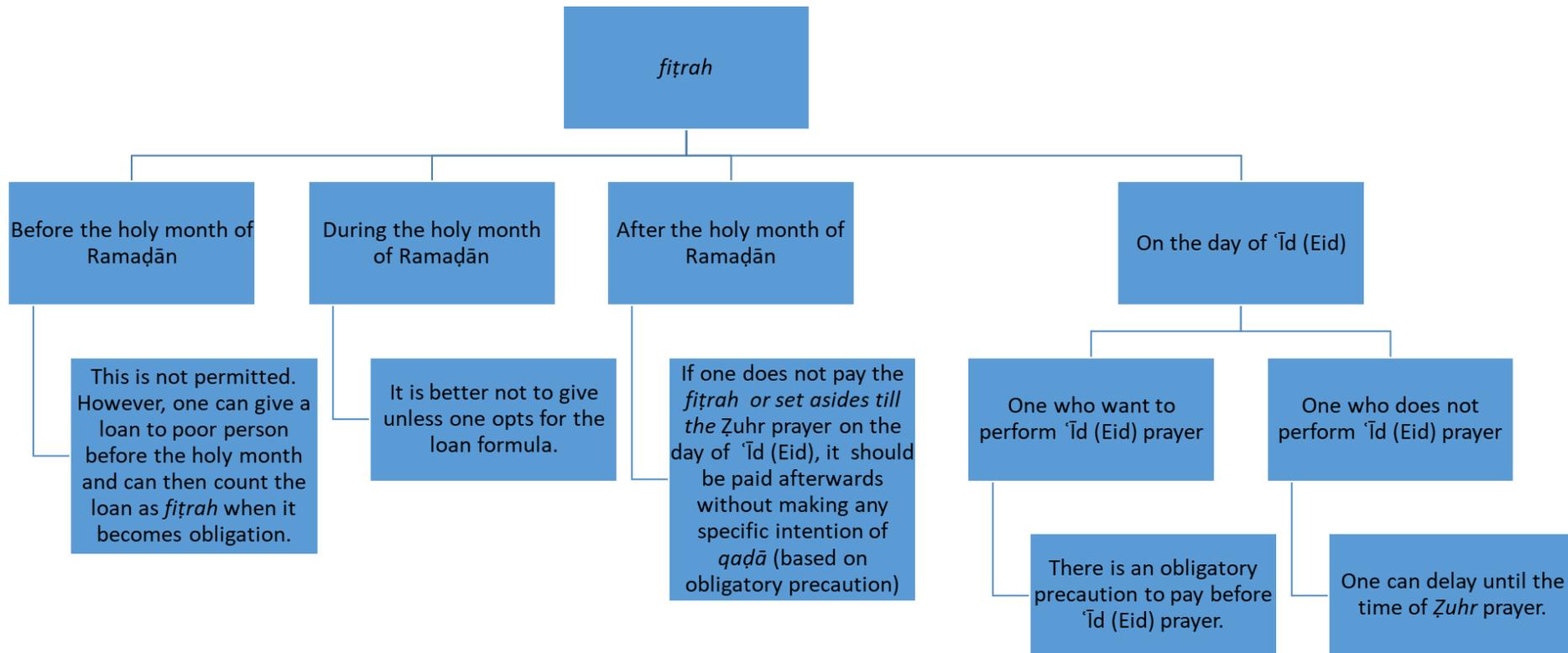
1. The children studying abroad are considered as dependents if they rely on the financial support of their parents.
2. The *iftārī* guests (who do not usually stay the whole night at the host's place) are not considered as dependents.
3. The *ḥiṭrah* must also be paid on behalf of a servant/worker whose living expenses are met by one who has hired her/him in a manner that she/he is considered to be that individual's dependent.

What should be paid?

Approximately three kilogrammes of the staple food of the region where one lives such as wheat, rice, etc. The monetary value of these items would also suffice.

³ All the rulings mentioned in these notes are based on the *fatāwā* of Ayatullah Sistani

When should be paid?



Who is entitled to receive it?

- Based on the obligatory precaution⁴, *fiṭrah* should be paid to a needy Shī'ah. It should not be given to one who does not perform regular prayers or one who consumes alcohol or publicly commits sins. In the event, there are no needy Shī'ah in one's town; it can be given to other Muslims.
- A Sayyid is not entitled to receive *fiṭrah* from a non-Sayyid.
- It is recommended to prefer giving *fiṭrah* to one's poor relatives and neighbours. It is also appropriate that preference is given to learned, religious and virtuous poor people.

Organisations/Distributors:

- The obligatory precaution is that *fiṭrah* should be disbursed in one's own region and must not transfer to another place. However, if one transfers and disburses in its appropriate place and cause, it is sufficient. In this case, one must confirm that it has reached the needy person in another region.
- Based on obligatory precaution, the *fiṭrah* should only be disbursed among poor people and should not be used in general welfare affairs.⁵ Nonetheless, it is up to the needy people where to use it. They could use it for medication, education or any of their welfare affairs. The distributor cannot stipulate condition of any specific usage.
- There is no obligation on the distributors to make it reach to the needy people on the day of 'Īd (Eid). They can distribute the collected *fiṭrah* whenever they find the appropriate place and people. It is quite evident that unreasonable delay is not be justified.

All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.

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⁴ In the cases of obligatory precaution, the follower enjoys the option of referring to the second most learned *mujtahid*.

⁵ For instance, economic upliftment project, health centres etc.