



Zakāt FAQs

Q: What is *zakāt* due on?

A: *Zakāt* is owed on gold, silver, cash, and business goods (goods bought with the intention of selling them for profit). From these assets, if a woman owns only gold, she must own 7.5 tolas (87.48 grams) of gold before *zakāt* becomes obligatory on her. If she owns less than this, she does not have to give *zakāt*. If a woman owns only silver, she must own 52.5 tolas (612.36 grams) of silver before *zakāt* becomes obligatory on her. If she owns only cash or business goods, or any combination of these four *zakātable* assets (e.g. she owns some gold and some cash), she will owe *zakāt* if the total monetary value of the *zakātable* assets she owns reaches the monetary value of 52.5 tolas of silver (about 472 USD at the time of this publication). This minimum amount is known as *nisāb*.

Q: When is *zakāt* due?

A: One lunar year from the time a person first becomes owner of this minimum amount of *zakātable* wealth, their *zakāt* first becomes due. For many women, this is around the time of their marriage when they are gifted gold jewelry by their parents, or it could be the date when they receive their first paycheck. Thereafter, it becomes due on the same date of the lunar calendar every year.

Q: Can we pay our *zakāt* before it is due?

A: It is permissible to give *zakāt* before it is due, but if there is an increase in one's wealth after this before the actual due date, one will have to pay additional *zakāt* for that amount also.

Q: Does *zakāt* have to be paid immediately?

A: *Zakāt* should be paid as soon as possible after it becomes due every year. However, if its payment is delayed, then if it is paid off within a year no sin will be incurred. But if its payment is delayed beyond a year such that the next year's *zakāt* now becomes due, this will be sinful.



Q: How do I calculate *zakāt*?

A: On the day when your *zakāt* becomes due, take stock of all your *zakātable* assets and calculate their total monetary value as per the rates on that day. This includes any gold and silver that you own (including jewelry that you wear regularly), cash in hand or in the bank (including any loans that you have taken from others), and the value of any business goods that you own.¹ If this total value is greater than the value of *nisāb* (which would be the monetary value of 52.5 tolas of silver) then your *zakāt* would be 2.5% of your total *zakātable* assets. Note that once a person owns *nisāb*, *zakāt* is due on the entire amount of their *zakātable* assets, not only on what is in excess of *nisāb*.

Q: What if I have debts to pay off?

A: If you have any debts to pay off within one lunar year from the time your *zakāt* becomes due (e.g., installments of a property you are purchasing, or a loan that you have taken from someone), then before calculating your *zakāt* you can minus the value of those debts from the total value of your *zakātable* assets on that date. If the remainder is still greater than the value of *nisāb*, then you will owe *zakāt* on the remainder. If the remainder is less than the *nisāb* amount, you will not owe any *zakāt*.

Q: Do I have to pay *zakāt* on money I have loaned to someone?

A: If there is hope that the money will be returned to you, you will have to pay *zakāt* on it.

Q: How do I calculate *zakāt* on my business assets?

A: *Zakāt* is due on ready stock and those raw materials which become a part of the final product (e.g., cloth, thread, laces, buttons in a clothing business) but not on equipment and machinery

Q: Is *zakāt* owed on property?

A: *Zakāt* is owed only on property that has been bought with the clear intention and purpose of re-selling for profit. Hence, it is *not* owed in the following cases:

- If it has been bought for personal use
- If it has been bought to gift to children
- If it has been bought to rent out
- If it is bought for any of the above purposes with the subordinate intention of selling if the value increases significantly
- If it has been inherited
- If it has been received as a gift or in return for some services
- If it is initially bought for any other reason but later we decide to put it up for sale

¹ Note that what is considered is the amount of *zakātable* wealth that you own on the *zakāt* due date, regardless of the increases or decreases over the previous year. Hence any assets gained over the year are added to the original assets, and *zakāt* for them is paid together, on the due date for the original assets; you do not have to wait for a year from the time the additional assets are acquired.



Q: Is *zakāt* due on jewelry we have kept for our non-*bāligh* child?

A: If you have gifted that jewelry to your child such that she is now considered the owner, no *zakāt* will be due on it until she becomes *bāligh*. Thereafter, she will be liable to pay *zakāt* on it. However, if you have not gifted it to her yet but have kept it aside with the intention of gifting it to her later (e.g., when she gets married), then you will still be considered its owner and will have to give *zakāt* on it until it is gifted to her.

Q: If we have previous years *zakāt* to pay off, how do we calculate it?

A: You will have to think back to what your *zakātable* assets were on your *zakāt* due date in each of those years and evaluate them according to the market values of the assets on that date.

Q: Who is eligible to receive *zakāt*?

A: We can give *zakāt* to Muslims who do not themselves own *nisāb* of gold, silver, cash, business goods or any combination of these equivalent to the value of 52.5 tolas of silver. Furthermore, they must also not own non-*zakātable* assets that are stored away and not in their use, whose total value when added to the value of their *zakātable* assets is equivalent to or exceeds *nisāb*. Hence, we cannot give *zakāt* to non-Muslims or to *Sayyeds*, i.e. those belonging to the family of the Prophet ﷺ; however, non-Muslims can be given voluntary charity and *Sayyeds* can be helped with money given with the intention of a gift.

Q: How should *zakāt* be dispensed?

A: The recipient of *zakāt* must be made its owner. We can hand the amount to them or transfer it to them, or we can make some payment on their behalf with their authorization or buy something for them with that money with their approval (e.g., ration or medicines). It is also permissible for someone else to make the *zakāt* payment on your behalf, and then for you to pay them back for it. The husband can pay *zakāt* on behalf of his wife as long as she is informed of it before-hand and agrees to it.

Q: What is the ruling of intention for *zakāt*?

A: Intention must be made for *zakāt* before it is handed over. There is scope for intending *zakāt* in charity that has already been given as long as the money has not been spent by the recipient. If the money is being given to someone else to pay on your behalf, you can make the intention when handing them the money. If you are keeping the *zakāt* money aside to pay from it later, it suffices to make the intention when setting it aside; intention does not need to be made again when paying from it.

Q: Can we give *zakāt* to *masjids* and *madrassahs*?

A: *Zakāt* can only be given to *masjids* and *madrassahs* if they pass that money on to individuals who are eligible to receive *zakāt*. In the case of *madrassahs* that charge a fee from their students, *zakāt* can also be given to the *madrassah* on behalf of eligible students if the students have authorized them to accept *zakāt* on their behalf and use it in lieu of their fee. *Zakāt* cannot be given directly to cover the expenses of the *masjid* or *madrassah*.



Q: Can *zakāt* be given to hospitals or schools or relief organizations?

A. Again, if these establishments pass on the *zakāt* money to individuals who are eligible to receive it or use it on behalf of such individuals with their authorization (e.g., for treatment in a hospital or to pay school fees or to buy ration) then *zakāt* can be given to them. But if the *zakāt* money goes into a general pool from which individuals who are not eligible also benefit, or it is used to meet the expenses of the establishment such as salaries or repairs or extensions etc., then it would not be permissible to give them *zakāt* money.

Q: Can *zakāt* money be used to feed people or set up a water dispenser?

A: *Zakāt* money can be used to provide food or water that deserving individuals can take home with them. It cannot be used to set up a food kitchen or *dastarkhwan* where people can come and eat, or a water dispenser that they drink from as in this case they are not being made owners of that water or food.

Q: Can we give *zakāt* to our relatives?

A: *Zakāt* can be given to all deserving relatives except to one's own parents or grandparents, children or grandchildren, or one's spouse.

