

HOW MUCH IS SADAQAH FITR ?



MUJLISUL ULAMA OF S.A.

PO Box 3393

Port Elizabeth

6056, South Africa

HOW MUCH IS SADQAH FITR?

There is some unneeded, superfluous difference of opinion regarding the Sadqah Fitr amount. One Molvi Sahib stating his opinion says:

“One of the purposes of Sadaqatul Fitra is that the less fortunate be enabled to enjoy some of the same benefits of Eid as their more entitled Muslim brethren.”

The Molvi Sahib has misunderstood the objective of Sadqah Fitr. Primarily, Sadqah Fitr consists of a measure of the staple food of the poor. Thus, the Shariah has explicitly ordered that Sadqah Fitr be primarily paid with grain – wheat, rice, or dates and the like.

Sadqah Fitr is not to provide a sumptuous meal of meat, pies, samoosas, biryaani, cakes, deserts, etc. This is not the objective of Sadqah Fitr. The *Maqsad* is to ensure that every poor Muslim has sufficient food on the Day of Eid. The fact that it is permissible to distribute one Sadqah Fitr amount to more than one Faqeer adequately nullifies the contention of the Molvi Sahib.

The Shariah has stipulated *one Sa'* (a measure of approximately 3.5 kilograms) of grain (Shaafis) or half a *Sa'* (Hanafis) as the Sadqah Fitr amount. This is a *Mansoos Alayh Hukm*. This measure has been explicitly confirmed by all the Math-habs and it has been in operation in the Ummah since the age of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). As far as we are aware, it is only in South Africa where some Molvis have differed with this 14 century *Ijmaa'i* law of the Shariah. It is indeed most audacious to venture an opinion which

conflicts with a law on which there has been Consensus of the entire Ummah for more than fourteen centuries.

The insistence on giving *only specific* grain, not flour, not bread, not money, etc. as Sadqah Fitr is remarkable in the Hambali and Shaafi' Math-habs. The Sadqah is not discharged if cash or biryaani or rice or meat or samoosas or any other type of food is given even if the monetary value is in excess of any value/amount suggested by the Molvi dissenters who have broken from the *Ijmaa'* of the Ummah.

The Molvi Sahib avers: *“The amount touted this year is the lowly sum of R22. How can this figure be justified, especially when comparing it against our laden tables on Eid day?”*

The Molvi Sahib has missed the bus. He is way off the Shar'i track. This erroneous conclusion is the product of his primary erroneous premiss which has been rebutted above. Comparison with the laden tables of the wealthy is not the standard for calculating Sadqah Fitr. The Shariah does not debar anyone from contributing such funds to the poor which could procure for them the sumptuous, albeit physically and spiritually ruinous dishes which Muslims devour nowadays. People are free to give voluntary Sadqah in any amount they desire. But to tamper with the laws of the Shariah is neither permissible nor acceptable. In the attempt to provide luxury food items, it is highly improper to seek a re-interpretation of the fourteen century law. Rather, the Molvi Sahib should encourage and exhort Muslims to open up their hearts and to contribute Sadqah generously.

If people contribute even a small percentage of the huge amounts which they squander in unnecessary luxuries, haraam functions, etc., then there will be ample funds available to feed the poor with the type of sumptuous dishes mentioned by

the Molvi Sahib. To say the least, it is indeed peculiar to seek a re-interpretation of a law of the Shariah cast in rock. It is essential to remember that the objective of Sadqah Fitr is not biryaani, samoosas, pies, carrion chickens and the mounds of processed flotsam ‘foods’ with which Muslims are destroying themselves physically and spiritually. The Shariah has selected for the poor their staple diet which is best for their general health.

The Molvi Sahib, campaigning for a change to the Shariah’s ruling, cries: *“I appeal to all Muslim brothers and sisters to do some introspection - per portion of what your Eid meals cost.”* The Molvi Sahib has calculated that for their ‘huge breakfasts, biryani, braais and suppers’ it costs about R100 per person, hence this is his criterion for determining the Waajib Sadqah Fitr.

Payment of Sadqah Fitr is Waajib. Non-payment is sinful, and the fasts of Ramadhaan are suspended between the earth and heavens as long as the Fitrah remains unpaid. Now if someone does not pay R100, will he be sinful? Will he be perpetrating a major sin, the consequence of which is Hell-Fire? If the answer is no, then the imposition of R100 is a stupid futility. If the answer is yes, then we ask: Did the Molvi Sahib receive Wahi to fix this amount? Has he solid Shar’i substantiation to impose his R100 as a Waajib obligation on the Ummah? It is quite obvious that the R100 is the Molvi’s personal opinion unbacked by any Shar’i daleel.

Furthermore, the Molvi’s determination is in flagrant conflict with the Shariah’s ruling of one or half *Sa’* of grain. The biryani and braai aspects play absolutely no role in the determination of Sadqah Fitr. The criterion is the *measurement* and the *staple* food of the Fuqara in particular. *The measurement is the Sa’, and the staple food is generally wheat*

or rice, etc. Any conflicting view is to tamper with the Shariah.

In our environment, there are hardly any Fuqara who qualify for Sadqah Fitr. While there are many who qualify to accept Zakaat, there are almost none for Sadqah Fitr. Genuine Fuqara and Masaakeen are in other lands where a single Fitr amount is greatly appreciated and where it can feed a family for the day with their staple food. Even the 'poor' here own cell phones for savouring pornography. The R22 Fitr will suffice for a couple of cell phone cards. The 'poor' here are not in need of staple food for which R22 is more than adequate. Yes, it is not adequate for haraam braais and carrion chickens, but such issues are unrelated to Sadqah Fitr.

The Molvi's mention of the 'Pleasure of Allah' in the context of Sadqah Fitr is misplaced. Muslims are always encouraged to spend on the poor generously. This is not reliant on Sadqah Fitr nor restricted to the Day of Eid. There is absolutely no need to tamper with the Sadqah Fitr law for exhorting people to be kind, generous and helpful to the poor and destitute. Such kindness is Waajib all year round and is unrelated to Sadqah Fitr.

Unthinkingly, the Molvi Sahib says: *“For anyone objecting to this (i.e. to the R100 fitrah opined by the Molvi Sahib), there is also a mention in the Hadith about one Sa'a of dates (approximately 2 kilograms). How much is that today?”*

If the Molvi Sahib had applied his mind, he would not have made this futile observation. The Sa' of dates is, firstly, optional. The Ahaadith allow several options. Payment of Fitr is not fixed with dates or wheat or barley, etc. It is the staple food of a community. Secondly, dates for South

African Muslims, including the very poor, is not a food consumed to fill the stomach. It is not their staple food. In fact, even in Arabia, it is no longer the staple food. Thirdly, there is no Shar'i obligation to compute the Sadqah Fitr amount with the dates yardstick. The criterion is the *staple food* of a people.

In South Africa, during every Ramadhaan, tons of dates are distributed to the poor, apart from Sadqatul Fitr. Half a kilogram is not used by most people over an entire month. Towards the middle of Ramadhaan, we hand boxes of dates to brothers to seek out takers. While people will devour many kilograms of halaalized diseased carrion chickens, they consume dates frugally in South Africa. It is, therefore, not a standard for the calculation of Sadqah Fitr.

A campaign to encourage Muslims to contribute money for the needs of the poor is always welcome and an act of great merit. But the basis for such campaigns should not be mutilation of the Shariah's *ahkaam* by self-opinion and baseless interpretation stemming from fancy and whim. Today the desire is to tamper with the Shariah's stipulated Fitr amount. Tomorrow this satanic re-interpretation will be extended to Zakaat. Instead of 2.5%, some Molvi Sahib will suggest that it should be 5%.

Let us now see what the Fuqaha of Islam say regarding Sadqah Fitr.

“Regarding that which is Waajib: The Waajib amount is half Sa’ of wheat or one Sa’ barley or one Sa’ of dates according to us (i.e. the Hanafis).” Ash-Shaafi said: One Sa’ of wheat.The flour of wheat and barley is the same according to us (Ahnaaf).” (Badaaius Sanaa’)

If the Sadqah is paid with raisins, the ruling according to the Ahnaaf vacillates between a Sa' and half a Sa'. The reasoning underlying the half Sa' of raisins, is:

“The price of raisins is normally more than the price of wheat, hence half Sa' raisins suffices.....It is possible to reconcile the two different views (Imaam Abu Hanifah's view and the view of Saahibain regarding raisins) by means of determining the Waajib amount on the basis of the price. During the era of Imaam Abu Hanifah the price (of raisins) was the same as that of wheat, and during the time of Saahibain the price was as the price of barley and dates.” (Badaaius Sanaai')

The wheat standard adopted by our Fuqaha is most significant in understanding the wisdom underlying the obligation of Sadqah Fitr. In terms of value, a Sa' of raisins was higher than the value of a Sa' of wheat. Despite payment of Fitr being of greater merit in terms of money than grain according to the Ahnaaf, and despite the value of a Sa' of raisins being having a higher monetary value, our Fuqaha reduced the quantity to the equivalent of the value of wheat. Although it would have been in the interests of the Fuqara to have retained a Sa' for raisins, this principle of *Anfa' lil fuqara* (That which is more beneficial for the Fuqara), which is utilized for calculating the Zakaat Nisaab, has been discarded for determining Sadqah Fitr. It is thus clear that the standard is the staple food of a community and the Sa' measure.

The Shaafi' Math-hab has an even narrower and more rigid concept of Sadqah Fitr.

“That which is Waajib is a Sa' according to the Sa' of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) because of the Hadith of Ibn Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu).....Abul Abbaas and Abu Ishaq said that it is incumbent with the staple food of a

community..... If in a city there is no specific staple food, then it (Sadqah Fitr) shall be paid with the staple food of the nearest city.

Our Ashaab (i.e. the Shaafi' Fuqaha) say that the condition (for the discharge of) of Sadqah Fitr by means of the staple foods (of communities) is that it should be (such products) in which Ushri is Waajib. Therefore anything besides this will not be valid.....

Al-Maawardi said that similarly (i.e. will not suffice for Sadqah Fitr) fish and eggs even if these are the staple food of some islanders. In this there is no difference of opinion.

With regard to meat (as Sadqah Fitr), the correct view is that As-Shaafi' has stated explicitly thereon and the Ashaab in all narrations have emphatically said that it is not permissible..... Similarly, even if the staple food of some community is fruit on which there is no Ushri such as figs, etc., then this will not suffice (for Sadqah Fitr).

Ash-Shaafi' and the Ashaab said that flour and saweeq (barley cereal) will not suffice just as the value (monetary value) will not suffice.”

(Kitaabul Majmoo')

The above is a very brief summary of the Shaafi' viewpoint. There is considerable elaboration and differences regarding the details of Sadqah Fitr in the Shaafi' Math-hab. However, the differences all pertain to the 'staple' food and the measure of the *Sa'*. But the *staple food* and the *Sa'* are the two fundamentals of Sadqah Fitr.

In terms of the Hambali Math-hab too, the criterion is the *Sa'* and the *staple food*.

“(It is) the Sa' according to the Sa' of Nabi (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). One Sa' is Waajib for every person....

How much is Sadqah Fitr

Sadaqatul Fitr is discharged by means of the dominant staple food of the city. ...It is (also) fulfilled by means of every type of grain which is the staple food when the mansoos alay types are not available (i.e. wheat, barley, dates , etc. mentioned by Rasulullah – Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). From this it is apparent that (other items) besides this, is not sufficient, e.g. meat and milk (do not suffice for Sadqah Fitr).

If one is able to give dates or raisins or wheat or barley or iqat (a kind of cheese), and he gives something else besides (any of these mansoos alay items), then it will not suffice (for the discharge of Sadqah Fitr) according to the Zaahir Mathhab. Diversion from these kinds (mentioned in the Hadith) is not permissible when one has the ability to (discharge the Sadqah) with it regardless of the ma'dool ilayh (the other item) being the staple food or not.....

Maalik said that it should be paid with the dominant staple food of the city, and Ash-Shaafi' said that any staple food which is dominant for a person....

It is permissible to pay (Sadqah Fitr) with flour and saweeq (a cereal of barley). Maalik and Shaafi' said that it is not permissible with these two items.

It is not permissible to pay Sadqah Fitr with bread, hareesah (a biryani kind of dish), kaboola (oats) and their like (such as the Molvi's biryaani, braai, pies, carrion chickens, etc.) because it (Sadqah Fitr) is paid by means of measure (i.e. the Sa') and items which are not perishable. Nor can it be paid with vinegar and dabs (molasses) because these are not staple foods.

Imaam Ahmad said (regarding paying Sadqah Fitr with money): "I fear that it will not suffice because it is in conflict with the Sunnah of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam).Maalik and Shaafi' held the same view."

(Al-Mughni – Ibn Qudaamah)

How much is Sadqah Fitr

There is likewise difference of opinion on the details of staple food, nevertheless, the criterion according to the Hambali Math-hab is also *Sa' and staple food*, not biryaani, braai meat and carrion chickens which has become a kind of 'staple food' for the Molvis of this era.

According to the Maaliki Math-hab, the fundamentals are the same, namely, *Sa' and the staple food*.

“The dominant staple food from wheat, barley, rice, corn, dates, raisins, and cheese, is Waajib..... Paying (the Sadqah Fitr) with that which is not the dominant staple food is not valid except if it is of a superior kind, for example if the staple food is barley, and they pay with wheat, it will suffice.”

(Al-Mathaahibul Ar-ba'ah)

It will be clear from the aforementioned citations that according to all four Math-habs, the determinants for Sadqah Fitr are the *Sa' and the staple food* of a community. In all the Math-habs, the differences centre around these two essential requisites. This has been the position of the Shariah since the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). It is only in our time that some Molvis lacking in proper understanding, are advocating a new carrion standard which is in total conflict with the *Ijma'* (Consensus) of the Ummah.

While promoting and propagating generosity for the Fuqara are most welcome, this should not be at the expense of interfering with the *ahkaam* of the Shariah.

Some rules of Sadaqah fitr

1. Sadaqatul fitr or Fitrah is waajib (compulsory) upon all Muslims- male, female and children who on the Day of Eid-ul-fitr are owners of the Nisaab of Zakaat. I.e. approximately the rand value of the current price of 19.6875 troy ounces or 612g of silver (Hanafi Math-hab). According to the Shaafi math-hab, Fitrah becomes obligatory, if one has sufficient food for one's household for one day and one night (24 hours). Thus, if one is not the owner of the Zakaat Nisaab value, Fitrah will yet be compulsory according to the Shaafi Math-hab.
2. According to the Hanafi Math-hab, the Fitrah becomes Waajib when the Day of Fitr dawns with the commencement of Fajr time. Therefore, if someone died before entry of Fajr on the day of Eid, Fitrah will not be paid out of his (the deceased's) estate, since the Fitrah is not Waajib upon him. And, if a child is born before the rising of Fajr, Fitrah will be paid on his behalf. If the child is born after the entry of Fajr (on the day of Eid), Fitrah is not Waajib on his behalf.
3. According to the Shaafi Math-hab, Fitrah becomes incumbent with the commencement of the night of Eid-ul-fitr, i.e. the moment the sun sets on the last day of Ramadhaan. Thus, if someone dies after sunset on the last day of Ramadhaan (i.e. the first of Shawwaal) Fitrah shall be paid out of his estate. Fitrah will not be waajib upon a child born after sunset of the last day of Ramadhaan.

4. According to the Hanafi math-hab, the father has to pay the Fitrah on behalf of his minor children, i.e. those who have not yet attained the age of puberty.
5. According to the Hanafi Math-hab, it is not obligatory upon the husband to pay the Fitrah on behalf of his wife. If she is the owner of the Nisaab, she shall pay her own Fitrah.
6. According to the Shaafi Math-hab, it is obligatory upon the man to pay the Fitrah on behalf of his minor children as well as his wife.
7. If a minor is the owner of wealth to the amount of Nisaab, then payment of Fitrah on behalf of the minor could be made from his (minor's) wealth. This is according to both Hanafi and Shaafi Math-hab.
8. The Fitrah should preferably be paid before the Eid Salaat.
9. It is not permissible to delay the Fitrah later than the day of Eid. However, if it was not paid on the day of Eid or before, the obligation remains and the Fitrah will have to be paid.
10. It is permissible to pay the Fitrah in advance at anytime during the month of Ramadhaan. This is according to

How much is Sadqah Fitr

both Hanafi and Shaafi math-hab. However according the Hanafi Math-hab, Fitrh could be paid even before Ramadhaan whereas according to the Shaafi Math-hab , payment of Fitrh before Ramadhaan is not valid.

11. Sadaqatul Fitr is Waajib upon all those who fasted as well as those who did not fast for some reason or the other. This is according to both Hanafi and Shaafi Math-hab.
12. Fitrh amount is the price of approximately 1.75kg flour according to the Hanafi Math-hab. According to the Shaafi Math-hab it is 3.5kg of Flour.
13. Instead of cash, Flour may be given.
14. Fitrh can only be paid to the “poor”. Those who are entitled to accept Zakaat.
15. Fitrh cannot be utilized for any charitable purpose other than the poor. Therefore, if Fitrh monies are accumulated and then spent on some other charitable cause, the Fitrh obligation of the Fitrh payers will not be discharged.