

Zakat — the third pillar

Not charity you choose, but a right fixed upon wealth. Who owes it, how much it is, and who may receive it.



★ One of the five

وَأَقِمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

“And establish prayer and give zakah.” Islam is built on five: the testimony, the prayer, zakat, Hajj, and the fast of Ramadan.

Qur'an 2:43 · Sahih al-Bukhari 8

★ A known right on wealth

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَعْلُومٌ

“And those within whose wealth is a known right — for the petitioner and the deprived.” Known: a fixed share, not a mood.

Qur'an 70:24–25 · 51:19

★ One-fortieth

Abu Bakr's written instruction: for silver the zakat is one-fortieth of the lot — 2.5%, taken once the threshold is reached.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1454

★ From the rich to the poor

“It is to be taken from the wealthy among them and given to the poor among them.” He ﷺ added: do not take the best of people's property.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1395, 1496

★ The eight who receive it

The poor, the needy, its collectors, those whose hearts are to be won, captives, debtors, the cause of Allah, the stranded traveller.

Qur'an 9:60

★ It purifies the giver

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا

“Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase.” The wealth is cleaned, and so is its owner.

Qur'an 9:103

★ Withholding it

Wealth whose zakat is unpaid is made on the Day of Resurrection into a snake that circles its owner's neck: “I am your treasure.”

Sahih al-Bukhari 1403 · Qur'an 9:34

★ Not separable from prayer

Abu Bakr would fight those who kept the prayer but withheld the zakat: “I will fight whoever separates the two.”

Sahih al-Bukhari 1399

★ Pay it through the collectors

Collectors are a Qur'anic category of their own. In Malaysia each state has its own zakat authority, and it publishes the current nisab.

Qur'an 9:60 · Sahih al-Bukhari 1395