

67280 - Which is better in Ramadan, to give zakah in the form of money or to feed the poor?

the question

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Detailed answer

With regard to the obligatory zakah, this is an act of worship for which there is an appointed time, which is when one hijri year has passed since the nisaab (minimum threshold) was acquired. When one year has passed, it becomes obligatory to pay zakah, and it is not permissible for the one on whose wealth zakah is due to delay paying it on time, except for a legitimate shar'i excuse.

It is not permissible to wait for the month of Ramadan in order to pay zakah at that time, unless it is a short delay such as one or two weeks. See question no. [13981](#).

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

zakah must be paid immediately, and it is not permissible to delay paying it when one is able to pay if there is no fear of harm. This is the view of al-Shaafa'i. End quote.

Al-Mughni, 2/289

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked:

Is zakah better in Ramadan, even though it is one of the pillars of Islam?

He replied:

zakah, like other good deeds, is better when done at a time of virtue, but when zakah becomes obligatory and the year has passed, it becomes obligatory for a person to pay it, and he should not delay it until Ramadan. If the year is completed in Rajab, then he should not delay it until Ramadan, rather he should pay it in Rajab. If the year is completed in Muharram then he should

pay it in Muharram, and not delay it until Ramadan. But if the year is completed in Ramadan, then he should pay it in Ramadan. End quote.

Fatawa Islamiyyah, 2/164

Perhaps what the questioner means by zakah is voluntary charity. Undoubtedly generosity and giving money, food, clothing etc in Ramadan is better than doing it in other months. Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was at his most generous in Ramadan.

It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the most generous of people, and he was at his most generous in Ramadan when he met Jibreel; he used to meet him every night in Ramadan and review the Qur'aan with him. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was more generous than the wind." Narrated by al-Bukhaari (6) and Muslim (2308).

Al-Nawawi said: This hadith teaches us several things, such as that it is mustahabb to be more generous in Ramadan.

Sharh Muslim, 15/69

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the most generous of people, and he was at his most generous in Ramadan, when he would give a great deal of charity, do good deeds, read Qur'aan, remember Allah (dhikr) and observe i'tikaaf. End quote.

Zaad al-Ma'aad, 2/32

Feeding people brings a great reward to the one who does it. Allah (may He be glorified and exalted) states that one of the characteristics of the believers who deserve Paradise is that they feed others. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And they give food, in spite of their love for it (or for the love of Him), to the Miskeen (the poor), the orphan, and the captive,

9. (Saying): 'We feed you seeking Allah's Countenance only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you.

10. 'Verily, We fear from our Lord a Day, hard and distressful, that will make the faces look horrible (from extreme dislike to it).'

11. So Allah saved them from the evil of that Day, and gave them Nadhra (a light of beauty) and joy.

12. And their recompense shall be Paradise, and silken garments, because they were patient"

[al-Insaan 76:8-12]

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever gives food to a fasting person to break his fast will have a reward like his." Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (807), Ibn Maajah (1746); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi.

The righteous salaf were keen to give food, because of the reports which encouraged that, as well as the many acts of worship that stemmed from that, such as love for those whom they fed. So it was a means of them entering Paradise. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "You will not enter Paradise until you truly believe and you will not truly believe until you love one another."

It also results in gatherings of the righteous and seeking reward by helping them to obey Allah by means of the strength which they gain from your food.

With regard to one of them being better than the other, many of the salaf preferred to feed their brothers in faith rather than give charity to the poor. There is a marfoo' hadith narrated concerning that from Anas, with a da'eef isnaad, especially if one's brothers cannot find any food but this.

It was narrated from 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: "For me to gather some of my brothers together to eat a saa' of food is dearer to me than entering your market and buying a slave and setting him free."

It was narrated that Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali said: For me to call ten of my companions and offer them food that they like is dearer to me than setting free ten of the sons of Ismaa'eel.

Sharh hadith ikhtisaam al-mala' al-a'la by Ibn Rajab, from Majmoo al-Rasaa'il, 4/41.

Conclusion: Both giving money in charity and giving food are virtuous deeds, so strive to do both, so that you will have a share of both types of worship.

And Allah knows best.