



ZAKAT
FOUNDATION
of AMERICA

Fostering Charitable Giving for Those in Need

Assalaamu Alaykum

Dear Imams, Masjid Presidents and Masjid Directors,

The purpose of this Zakat Kit is to tackle the growing problem of Muslims in need, particularly with today's grim economy. Though many are in need, we estimate that only a small percentage of Muslims are giving Zakat properly. While Zakat is an individual obligation, it is an Islamic requirement to collect and distribute it in an organized way by the collective community, as the Prophet practiced.

Charity is mentioned in the Quran 150 times. However, it is often neglected while Masjids focus almost exclusively on salah. Perfecting one's prayer is an important goal, but it is not an excuse to overlook our Zakat duty. We need to increase awareness of Zakat and strive to perfect our generosity.

We ask that you encourage your members to take part to fulfill a crucial Islamic duty. By implementing this program, you will be helping reduce poverty in your community.

We have produced a Zakat Kit so that you and other Masjids can help Muslims fulfill their required duty in Islam, insha'Allah. The Zakat Kit includes everything your Masjid will need to develop a successful Zakat Program:

- ✓ How-to guide for organizing a Zakat Committee, How to Collect & Distribute Zakat Funds, Hosting a Zakat Clinic and many more useful guides..
- ✓ Suggested dua to say after every prayer, and after Jumaa
- ✓ Two Khutbah outlines, contributing to the understanding of Zakat
- ✓ Masjid Zakat Application Form
- ✓ *The Zakat Handbook: A Practical Guide for Muslims in the West* produced by the Zakat Foundation, PDF version easily downloadable from our website in the Fiqh of Zakat section or contact us at info@zakat.org to order a hard copy.
- ✓ Ready-made article on July as Zakat Month to include in your Masjid's newsletter when appropriate

We hope our Zakat kit will help you promote Zakat in your community.

Wasalaam,

Khalil Demir

Khalil Demir

Executive Director

P.S. The need for Zakat has increased in these difficult economic times, so it is more important now than ever that our Masjids help us to satisfy the needs of our impoverished family, neighbors, and others. Allah says: "[W]ho give to charity during the good times, as well as the bad times. They are suppressors of anger, and pardoners of the people. God loves the charitable." (Surah Al-Imran, Verse 134)

The Role of the Zakat Committee

The Zakat Committee is an integral part of any well-performing Masjid. While encouraging the community to donate charity to the less fortunate is a key part of strengthening our Ummah and increasing collective generosity, it is easier said than done. That is why every Masjid needs a well-oiled Zakat Committee at the helm to organize the collection and distribution of Zakat in the community.

The role of the Zakat Committee is to collect Zakat funds and distribute them among the disadvantaged community members who need it. The role of every member on the Zakat Committee should be taken seriously, and must be filled by someone who can fully comply with the correct way to handle Zakat funds, according to Islamic guidelines.

Characteristics of Zakat Committee Members

Each member of the Zakat Committee should encompass certain qualities. Several qualities, though intangible, a member must have are taqwa, honesty, trustworthiness, and a welcoming personality.

More concrete qualities include: having read (or is willing to read) a book on Zakat to gain a knowledge about the rules of collecting and distributing Zakat; some accounting skills; database skills; as well as familiarity with eligibility requirements for receiving Zakat. At least one CPA in the committee is ideal.

A typical Zakat Committee may engage people for the following roles:

1. The group of people who actively keep an eye out for those Zakat applicants and eligible parties (in case a person did not apply for Zakat out of modesty).
2. The person or group who collects the Zakat money.
3. The accountant of the Zakat money.
4. The administrator, manager, bookkeeper, or secretary who organizes and orders the cases, applications, & files.
5. Those who decide about disbursement of Zakat funds.
6. The auditor who audits overall Zakat management and administration.

Steps to Forming A Zakat Committee In the Masjid

1. **Discuss organizing a Zakat Committee** with the Imam, Masjid president, or Masjid board to begin the process of starting one. Put it to your Masjid Shura, Imam or President about adding the topic of a Zakat Committee on the agenda for the next meeting.
2. **Volunteer to start a Zakat Committee.** Zakat Committees tend to be voluntary and informal. But if no one steps up to the responsibility, volunteer yourself. There are always good ideas everyone may support, but the key is someone volunteering to get the ball rolling. Also, volunteers with thorough knowledge of Zakat will be needed to form the committee. Because this may not be a paid position, it is important to find volunteers who are sincerely willing to commit their time and have at least semi-flexible schedules. This is essential, because the needy cannot usually wait for Zakat committee members to move their plans around and make time to review their Zakat application.
3. **Develop disbursement rules.** The Zakat Committee should use Islamic requirements and guidelines to form detailed disbursement rules. These rules should then be approved by the entire Zakat committee, and then adopted at the next Masjid board meeting. For assistance in forming disbursement rules, you can refer to the how-to-guide, "Collecting & Distributing Zakat Funds," we have included in your Zakat Kit.
4. **Get Confirmation** that the Mosque Board/Council has agreed to add your Zakat Committee's particular Shura to their family of committees.
5. **Go through Zakat Committee training.** It is of the utmost importance that the Masjid's Zakat Committee goes through training and studying for what the Zakat Committee is supposed to do in terms of reviewing applications, collecting and distributing funds, and how to apply the approved disbursement rules.

6. **Begin collecting.** It is up to the Zakat Committee to facilitate the opportunity for members of the Masjid to give Zakat. This includes regularly reminding the community about their Zakat duty, gently informing members at Jumaa Prayer the importance of Zakat in Islam, serving as an easy-to-reach liaison between Zakat givers and receivers, as well as organizing a Zakat Clinic in the Masjid.
7. **Developing (or adopting) an application.** A Zakat Committee's job is to help the needy get assistance: that includes helping them *ask* for assistance. Keep applications for Zakat readily available in the Masjid. To adopt a Zakat application or for help in forming your own, please refer to the Zakat application we have included in your Zakat Kit.
8. **Review applications thoroughly.** Many individuals and families are fully depending on the assistance from the Zakat fund. It is the least the Zakat committee can do to give each application their full attention and fully discern who deserves assistance, and how much. To determine beneficiaries, Zakat Committees must use the requirements of the Quran and Sunnah as a guide, and must regularly refer and adhere to their own established disbursement rules.

WITH THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST BENEFICENT, THE MOST MERCIFUL

Article for Masjid Newsletter

Prepare for Zakat Month

The current economic climate has caused a severe financial strain on our neighbors and fellow Muslims. Currently, a whopping 40 percent of Americans live below the poverty level. More are joining them every day. There are a (very) few signs that the economy may be finding its way to improvement in some areas, but progress is excruciatingly slow. Our homeless, our poor need help now.

Zakat, the third pillar of Islam, is one of the most important duties required of a Muslim. As such, we have designated this July to be “Zakat Month,” a month-long campaign to increase our acts of Zakat and help erase poverty in our community. Allah says in the Quran:

“All that was asked of them was to worship God, devoting the religion absolutely to Him alone, observe Salah, and give Zakat. Such is the perfect religion.” (Quran 98:5)

We Muslims are not asked to do an unbearable amount—we are not even asked to give an unbearable amount—just a small percentage of our savings to those who have much less than us. Often, Muslims are confused about whether or not they have to pay Zakat, how much they are supposed to give, and how to calculate it. We hope Zakat Month will answer many of your questions.

Throughout Zakat Month, the Masjid will be committed to educating the community about Zakat and incorporating more Zakat-related information in our programs. This may include regular halaqas and khutbas surrounding the benefit of Zakat, and helping community members calculate their correct Zakat amount. The Masjid will also be assisting in the fair collection and distribution of Zakat among the poor.

We have chosen July as Zakat Month because it is one month before Ramadan this year. Ramadan serves as a popular month for Muslims to give Zakat, Masha’Allah. But there are needy people all year round, and we hope that implementing a complete Zakat Month program outside of Ramadan will help to remind each of us of giving Zakat year round.

This charitable giving is a physical act that highlights the commitment each of us has to our fellow Muslim in need.

We urge each member of our community to take part in Zakat Month. We cannot be successful in eliminating poverty in our neighborhoods without everyone’s help. In the spirit of Zakat month, try something new with your family members, neighbors and friends. A few ideas include:

1. Initiate family halaqas once a week; make the topic Zakat-related, following the theme of Zakat month.
2. Learn how to correctly calculate how much Zakat to give. Teach someone else.
3. REMIND others about the importance of giving Zakat! You can bring them along to a Zakat lesson at the Masjid, or make it your next halaqa topic. You could even send out customized Zakat e-cards. All of these ideas are gentle reminders that go a long way.
4. Consume less, share more. At least for just this Zakat month, cut back on an unnecessary expense. Do you buy several \$5 coffees every week? Are you prone to excessive shoe-shopping? Cut back on your expensive habits during Zakat month and consider donating a portion of your savings to someone who doesn’t have the luxury of food or even shoes.

The Prophet Mohammad described our Ummah as organs in a body: when one organ is sick, the other organs rally and respond to it. As a community, we have to unite and help each other when even just one person is suffering. In this, the bonds of Muslims—from the smallest community to the collective Ummah—can be strengthened.

MASJID ZAKAT DUA SUGGESTIONS

One Imam should make a dua collectively with the community, after every prayer and Jumaa, to bring focus to poor people and to encourage collection and distribution of Zakat. Duas should even be sent out to e-mail list serve so Muslims can make the dua at home and remember Zakat outside of the Masjid.

The below are only sample suggestions. We encourage you to also develop your own duas and share them with your community.

Dua to Protect from Poverty, Greed, & Reward Generosity

1. Allah! You are the Most Generous, the Provider. Please help those in need, those in poverty. Oh Allah, please continue to bless us and provide for us, because no provisions are possible without Your will.
2. Oh Allah! Protect us from miserliness, for it ruined those who came before us. Oh Allah! Help us repay our debts, and free us from poverty. Oh Allah, protect us from all poverty and sorrows.
3. Allah, the Generous, the Giver, I turn to You and beseech You to provide for me sustenance generously, easy success and abundant livelihood with which I will set aright my disordered business and confusion of my affairs, pay my debts, and support my family. O Allah! You are the Great Bestower.
4. Oh Allah, please remember those who give Zakat, who take from their earnings that You have granted them and strive to be generous and give back to their neighbors. Remember those who give charity and reward them and let them enter into the highest of heavens.

Dua to be grateful & protect us from greed

1. Oh Allah! Protect us from being arrogant and boastful. Protect us from greed and forgetting to be grateful. O Allah, purify our hearts of all greed. Protect us from forgetting that all our blessings, provisions and money come from you, O Allah, the All-Seeing, the All-Knowing, the ultimate Provider.
2. Oh Allah! Let us obtain righteousness and spend out of what we love for your sake. Please have mercy on us and continue to bless and sustain us and provide for us. Let us never be ungrateful for what you provide us. Help us to always be thankful for the blessings you shower on us. And help us to share those blessings with our relatives, neighbors, and friends in need.
3. Oh Allah! Help us individually and as a community to perfect our prayer and our Zakat. Let us perfect it, and spend from what you've given us before the Day arrives when there will be no bargaining, nor any mutual befriending.
4. Oh Allah, My Sustainer, give me abundant sustenance. Let its source be near me and let me be pleased with it. Protect me from the risks that threaten my heart, my faith, and provisions that may not be good for me or those that may cause me to grow farther from you. Bless me only in the ways that will bring me closer to you, that will increase me in gratitude and faith.

Dua about Giving Zakat

1. Oh our Lord! Do accept from us our Zakat. Please help me to learn more ways to alleviate the suffering of my needy neighbors. Verily, You hear and know everything.
2. Oh Allah! Help each of us give more Zakat and strengthen as a community. Help us to learn and remember what the Quran and Sunnah teach about Zakat, and let us benefit from the rewards You promised those who give Zakat correctly.
3. Oh Allah, help us to consume less and share more. Help us to remember that Zakat is a duty on us. Oh Allah, help us give Zakat and help the needy year-round.
4. Oh Allah, let us as a community come together to help our neighbors and help the needy. Let us be better neighbors to each other and offer Zakat whenever we are able. Oh Allah, please give us more so that we have more to give.

Khutbah Outline—Surah Ma’oon—Chapter 107: Verses 1-7

- Intro: Current State of Poverty; Consuming Less & Sharing More
- Surah Al-Ma’oon, and Twin Tests Of Faith
- What We Can Do Now

FIRST SET: Intro, State of Poverty; Consuming less, sharing more:

- ❖ **What we consume:** It is up to every Muslim to reevaluate ourselves, and how much we consume. Statistics show that we could do with consuming less and sharing more with our neighbors:
 - Today, more than 80 percent of humanity lives on less than \$10 a day.
 - i. Put it into perspective: Most of us spend that much or more just on lunch each day.
 - We are consuming more resources than necessary. The average American—just one—consumes as much energy as 370 Ethiopians.
 - Furthermore, America throws out an average of 200,000 tons of edible food every single day. That's food that is not benefiting the countless hungry within our own country, state, and neighborhood, not to mention the starving communities worldwide.
- ❖ **How to consume less, and share more Zakat.** Zakat is the physical representation of our commitment to each other, to the needy in our community. **Prophet Mohammad described this Ummah to be “like the organs of the body. If one suffers then all others rally in response.”**

So when there are needy in our community and members who are suffering, it is up to the rest of us to rally and seek to ease their distress.
- ❖ **Twin Tests of Faith:** In Surah Al-Ma’oon, we are reminded of our twin tests of faith: Salat and Zakat. One cannot be fully completed without the other. In our Prayer we must connect with Allah, devoted in our worship. But for our Prayer to mean anything, we also have to fulfill our Zakat duty—and in this way, connect with our fellow human being, Allah’s creations. By connecting with Allah’s creations through devoted service, we can get closer to Allah. In this Khutbah, we will explore this concept.

SECOND SET: Surah Al-Ma’oon, and Twin Tests Of Faith

Surah Ma’oon: “Have you seen him who denies Our religion? It is he who harshly repels the orphan and does not urge others to feed the needy. Woe to those who pray but are heedless of their prayers; who put on a show of piety but refuse to give even the smallest help to others.”

In Surah Ma’oon, Allah warns the Muslims who harshly repels the orphans and the needy, and then prays for show, lacking in sincerity. So our twin tests of faith include:

- ❖ **Sincerity**—To complete an action with our hearts, not just physically: The Messenger of Allah said: “Allah does not look at your bodies nor your forms but He looks at your hearts and your actions.”
 - Allah knows what is in our hearts, and if we fail to provide for our needy, then it’s a certainty that our prayers will be empty of sincerity to Allah. How can we ask for more blessings from Allah and fail to ever share them? Then we cannot sincerely be thankful for what He has given us.
- ❖ **Our duty to Allah:** Prayer is one of the most important pillars of faith. In each prayer, we must prove our love and devotion to Allah, sincerely.

- ❖ **Our duty to each other:** But prayer without obeying Allah's command to help our brothers and sisters in Islam leads to a loss in meaning to our prayers. Through Zakat, or sharing the blessings Allah gives us with those in need, we are purifying our wealth and increasing our bond with each other, as well as our bond with Allah. When it comes to prayer and Zakat, if you do not fulfill both correctly, you may be among the hypocrites.
- ❖ **Reflections:** We have to ask ourselves: Are we connecting to our Creator through service to each other AND through our worship? Are we sharing with each other, the needy, and encouraging others to do so also? Are we encouraging our communities to do more for the poor?

THIRD SET: What We Can Do

- ❖ **We must also fulfill Allah's command in this Surah:** to give Zakat. Through small kindnesses—al-Ma'oon—we can increase our piety and perfect our sincerity in our prayer (dual purpose of Zakat: To nourish others and nourish our faith). To only perform the physical actions of salah and saying the words without letting the prayer touch your heart is a mockery of the prayer.
- ❖ **What can we do?** We can prepare for Zakat Month and encourage each other to give Zakat.
- ❖ **So tonight, or this weekend:** Sit with your families, your friends, and have a halaqa. Study Surah al-Ma'oon and its tafsir. Count your blessings and remember to SHARE. Be thankful for all Allah sends to you, and thank Allah by turning around and sharing what He has given you with others.
- ❖ **While you are sitting with your family or your friends,** start planning together if and how you can fulfill your Zakat duty, or give Sadaqah.
- ❖ **[ANNOUNCE ZAKAT ACTIVITIES IN YOUR MASJID.** Announce to audience if your Masjid is holding a Zakat Clinic, where the Zakat box is, and when the next halaqa or khutbah about Zakat is going to be.]
- ❖ Through giving Zakat, we can develop stronger characters and Iman, and help the needy, as Allah commands.

Khutbah Outline—Surah Wad Duha—Chapter 93: Verses 1-11

Surah Wad Duha & Zakat

- Intro, Our Situation Now, Compared to the Prophet's.
- Surah Ad-Duha, and The Lessons We Learn From It.
- What We Can Do Now.

FIRST SET (Intro; Despair and Pressure: Muslims' situation today compared to the Prophet's 1400 years ago.)

- ❖ **Starting the Khutbah—Start off with saying the best, most blessed way of repaying Allah for His blessings is to share those blessings with others, to give Zakat; the Quran and Hadith urge us to share and give to the needy.**
 - **Include hadith in Intro. Ex:** The Prophet Mohammad said: "Give charity without delay, for it stands in the way of calamity." - Al-Tirmidhi
 - **Surah Ad-Duha served as a comforting revelation to the Prophet.** In it, the Prophet and Muslims who are going through difficult times are commanded to remember their blessings, and then to repay Allah for His blessings to them (protection, wealth, guidance, etc.) by turning around and doing the same for our fellow human beings.
- ❖ **Today's Situation—Compare our situation in America now, to the Prophet's in Mecca.**
 - Muslims have a lot of pressure nowadays: We have to deal with Islamophobia, fueled by biased media. We deal with difficulty finding jobs, the economy, the poverty level. We have to deal with the threat of terrorism, even while we are often being blamed for the terrorism. And we have to deal with laws our country makes that sometimes violate our own rights.
 - According to a recent Gallup poll study, more than 40 percent of Americans have at least some prejudice against Muslims. We are living in a rough situation, and facing a lot of pressure.
 - But we have to remember the situation the Prophet was in.
- ❖ **Revelation, Putting Surah Ad-Duha into Context**
 - Surah Ad-Duha was revealed when the Prophet Mohammad was alone, and depressed. His people were being tortured, and he was being ridiculed by the Kuffaar. This was near the beginning of his Prophethood, so no sooner than the society that loved and praised him had turned against him. The same friends and neighbors and relatives who respected him were then abusing him.
 - This was a major, difficult change for the Prophet. It had been quite some time since he received any revelation. So he was afraid that Allah was angry with him. While he had lost the respect of much of society, he also thought Allah had abandoned him, causing him to fall into despair. This Surah came down to comfort and reassure the Prophet.
 - What we learn: No matter how bad things may seem, Allah never abandons His believers. And we should always look back at the Prophet and the Ummah's situation and put ours into perspective.

SECOND SET (What we learn from Surah Ad-Duha)

- ❖ **Learning from the lesson of Surah Ad-Duha**
 - Allah swears by both the late morning and the still night—and is telling the Prophet that during neither of these times was He ever absent; He never abandoned the Prophet.
 - He tells the Prophet, if you are facing difficulties, do not worry. This will pass. What is coming for you is better than this world. Be comforted.

- **What we learn:** We need to remember that during our hard times today, the Prophet was in a similar situation—it was even worse—and we have to remember what Allah told him. Allah did not abandon us. And insha'Allah, what is coming is better than what we have in this world now. We also have to remember: (Verses 9-11)
 - **Command of Zakat:** Allah then asks: Didn't He find the Prophet as an orphan, poor and lost? Didn't Allah then give the Prophet shelter, wealth, success, guidance and even Prophethood?
 - Allah was there for the Prophet when he was in need, providing for him, enriching his life, increasing him in provisions, allowing him to rise above his impoverished status. So how can the Prophet think he'd been abandoned? And there is still better to come for the Prophet in the Hereafter, insha'Allah.
- ❖ **Zakat, the poor, and thanking Allah in Surah Ad-Duha**
 - In Surah Ad-Duha, Allah goes from asking the Prophet questions to commanding him (and all Muslims): We must protect and provide for the orphans, the beggars, the needy, and be thankful and declare what Allah has blessed us with.
 - What we learn: The best way to thank Allah for the blessings He gives us is to turn around and do the same for our neighbors, relatives, and those in need.
 - This Surah emphasized the Muslim duty of Zakat to the needy.
 - We must do for all people what Allah did for the Prophet, and for us.

THIRD SET (Conclusion, and Zakat Month Activities)

- ❖ It is important for the Muslim not to despair and think "Allah has abandoned me, Allah is upset with me." You need to have a good, winning perspective on life and remember all the blessings Allah continues to bestow on you. And we must also fulfill Allah's command in this Surah: to give Zakat. This is an obligation, no matter how much difficulty we are having in our lives, because worrying about the other person actually makes us better people. This is what Allah is encouraging.
- ❖ So tonight, or this weekend sit with your families or your friends, and have a halaqa. Study Surah Duha and its tafsir. Count your blessings. Be thankful and find comfort in all the reminders Allah sends to you, letting you know He never abandoned you.
- ❖ While you are sitting with your family or your friends, start planning together how you can fulfill your Zakat duty or give Sadaqah.
- ❖ Announce Zakat Activities in your Masjid. Announce to audience if your Masjid is holding a Zakat Clinic, where the Zakat box is, and when the next halaqa or khutbah about Zakat is going to be.

ZAKAT ASSISTANCE APPLICATION FORM

To ensure the proper distribution of Zakat funds, every applicant must submit clear copies of the following:

1. Photo ID: For the applicant, spouse and all dependants; Driver's License, State Issued ID or Passport.
2. Social Security Card (for all those that provided photo ID as identification).
3. Lease agreement (If renting).
4. Proof of income (i.e. last pay stub).
5. Other documentation that might help in the evaluation; such as medical reports, receipts, billing statements, etc.

Complete ALL portions of this form. Write clearly. (All information is confidential and intended only for restricted internal use by authorized Masjid personnel and used exclusively for evaluation for Zakat requests.)

Name _____ Application Date _____

Date of Birth _____

Circle one: Picture ID # or Driver's License #

INFORMATION NEEDED FOR HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD/FAMILY

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Primary Phone _____ Alt. Phone _____

E-mail _____

Marital Status [Check One]: Single Married Divorced Widow

U.S. Citizen: [Check One] Yes No | If 'No, Immigration Status _____

Total Monthly Income of ALL Persons in the Household: \$ _____

Place of Residence: Own Your Home Rental Apartment Room Rental Shelter
 Low-income housing Other _____

EXPENSES

Rent: \$ _____ Utilities \$ _____

Other \$ _____ Describe _____

NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS _____ (including yourself)

Names of Family Members (including yourself)

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

EMPLOYMENT STATUS (circle one)

Full-time Part-time Unemployed Self-Employed Other

NEED: Detailed reasons for requesting assistance (please be specific) _____

Have you applied for Zakat assistance before? No () Yes () If so, when? _____

REFERENCES

Notice: Please list at least two individuals—references who can confirm and verify the information you have provided on this application. References should not be immediate relatives, people who live with you, or current Zakat recipients.

Reference No. 1

Name _____ Phone _____ Relationship _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Reference No. 2

Name _____ Phone _____ Relationship _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Applicant Signature _____ Signed _____

() I have read and understand the criteria for considering my application for Zakat. (if yes, check box.)

HOW TO START A SUCCESSFUL HALAQA GROUP IN YOUR MASJID

A major component of educating each other is the regular halaqa (study group). When executed correctly, halaqas can provide a regular dose of Islamic knowledge. To start a halaqa circle in your Masjid, here are a few things you can do to make sure it's successful:

1. Know who your audience is.

General halaqas that encompass both men and women, children and adults, etc., do not speak to each person on their own level. Some may want to be a part of a more advanced halaqa, but others may want just an introduction. Pick a demographic.

For example, a halaqa circle specifically for teenage girls is more likely to be focused and productive. Also, attendees will be more likely to connect with and learn from one another because they are in a similar demographic.

2. Have a core group.

Start out with a group of core halaqa members, even if it's just two to three people. It'll help you get started, and eventually others will notice your group regularly meeting at the same place and time and get curious. Their curiosity may lead them to join.

3. Be consistent.

If the halaqa is scheduled for every Friday after Maghrib prayer, KEEP it at that time. Constantly rescheduling halaqas or canceling confuses the people who want to come until they stop showing up altogether.

4. Find the best place to hold the halaqa

The Masjid is typically the best place to have a halaqa. The halaqa will be visible to passersby in the Masjid, contributing to the group's growth. New people may regularly join the halaqa each week or so. However, if you do plan on holding a halaqa in the Masjid, make sure you have their permission.

A person's home is also a suitable place to hold a regular halaqa. Some Masjids are not big enough to hold such gatherings, or have a full program schedule already.

5. Make it interesting and fun!

- Make each halaqa topic interesting and appealing.
- Give some group members the chance to contribute. This will keep them engaged.
- Help them apply the knowledge they learn in the halaqa meeting to real-life situations.

6. Be serious and keep attendees on their toes.

This is a serious meeting to further attendees' knowledge about Islam. Halaqas, though informal, are not a chance to hang out and give time for everyone to catch up with each other. It's okay to have fun, but make sure ***the halaqa leader and the attendees both stay focused.***

7. Engage with attendees outside of the halaqa meeting.

If it's possible, allow for "halaqa members" dinners or gatherings. The more fun attendees have with each other, the more likely they will come to halaqas meetings consistently because they will feel more engaged. This is also a chance to provide attendees with a circle of friends who will boost their Iman, especially if they have discouraging friends outside of the halaqa.

Although donation boxes can be found all around Masjids, Zakat boxes are less often seen. This may be because many Muslims give Zakat only during Ramadan. However, some Muslims prefer to give Zakat on an on-going basis. To facilitate that practice and emphasize Zakat's importance Masjids should have at least one additional box for Zakat (*separate from general Sadaqa or Masjid Fund boxes*).

Zakat boxes are an effective and easy way of gathering donations, whether they are loose pocket change or substantial checks (every little bit counts for those in need). But having an unlabeled jar, box, or basket randomly placed around the mosque is not going to maximize donations. Here are a few tips on how to make a Zakat box in your Masjid successful.

The Look

Some mosques' Zakat boxes are little more than nondescript containers. A dull Zakat box fades into the background and fails to remind Muslims that the Masjid is more than just a place to pray. If it catches a person's eye, it will serve as an instant reminder of their charitable duty. The idea, however, is not just to grab their attention but to make the box appealing.

You could invite a local artist to create the box, or even make it an arts and crafts project for the weekend school. A beautiful Zakat box triggers a willingness to give.

A Zakat box that contains only a very few donations does not mean that local Muslims are being stingy—it just means the box may have failed to catch their eye and remind them to give charity.

Label It

If you are going to go through the trouble of making a Zakat box you should label it. Otherwise, it just looks like a box. If it is not labeled some may assume the donations are going to the Masjid, not the needy. And it is very important that Muslims know that this money will be used for the poor. It may also be a good idea to post a flyer or bullet-pointed list about Zakat and its rewards near the box, to serve as an extra reminder.

The Location

When it comes to success, it is always about location. Zakat boxes should always be in an easily accessible place, yet convenient location. Avoid shaded corners, clutter (*i.e. a lot of books, papers, salah clothes, or worse: other boxes*) or places where it may be blocked from view (*by a pillar, podium, etc*). Also, the location should be a spot where the most people will pass by it, not just see it. Putting it in front of the room so that a person has to get up and cross the room to get to the Zakat box is not only inconvenient, but it puts the donor in everyone's line of sight, making it nearly impossible for the donation to remain secret.

Typically, the most convenient place is to put the Zakat box near the main doors, so a donation can be subtly added as a person exits the Masjid. Assess what spaces in your mosque are easily accessible, well-lit, and uncluttered.

Verbal Encouragement

Do not assume that every Muslim listening to the Khutbah understands the full importance and weight of their Zakat duty. Imams must regularly discuss what the Quran states about charity, and the ways the Prophet (peace be upon him) encouraged the Ummah to give. Remind them of the reward Allah (SWT) promises to the generous Muslim. Islamic knowledge is the strongest tool in compelling Muslims to act.

Whenever you discuss Zakat and its reward, carefully mention or direct members to the Zakat box.

Note: It's important to gently remind Muslims in your Masjid to give to the Zakat box, instead of aggressively ordering them to hand donations over. Remember the way of the Prophet, the gentlest of teachers.

Secure the box

Temptation is everywhere, even in the Masjid. And to a tempted person, a Zakat box is just a container full of money. This means you have to take measures to make sure that the donations in the Zakat box are secure. To reduce the chances of anything happening to the Zakat donations, try the following:

- **Choose a heavy box.** If you cannot secure the Zakat box, opt for a heavier container. It will be harder for anyone to grab it and run.
- **Avoid open-top boxes.** Make sure the Zakat box is closed on all sides except for a slit (*smaller than a persons hand*) on top in which to slip in donations. Open containers (*like a basket, or unlidded jar*) make it too easy for someone to reach in and grab.
- **Keep it in plain sight.** Of course, making an easy-to-spot Zakat box contributes to further donations but it also makes it harder for a thief to steal from the box without getting caught.
- **Empty the box and remove temptation.** The more money that is in the Zakat box, the more temptation to take from it grows. And it also means a greater loss of charity money to pass out if a thief is successful. Make it a priority to empty the Zakat box and distribute funds regularly—after every Isha prayer, or at least at the end of every week.

HOW TO GUIDE: COLLECTING & DISTRIBUTING ZAKAT FUNDS

While Zakat is an individual obligation, it is an Islamic requirement to collect and distribute the funds in an organized way, as the Prophet Mohammad practiced. A Zakat committee is a necessary structure that promotes charity in your community and helps to guarantee the proper administering of funds.

Here are a few guiding principles that will help your Masjid and its Zakat committee properly collect and distribute donations:

1. Keep it simple

Avoid a lengthy bureaucratic process. The last thing the needy should have to deal with is bureaucratic red tape. Too many technicalities only get in the way of helping the less fortunate.

Make the process as simple as possible for both donor and recipient. That way the poor can get what they need as soon as possible.

Remember, Allah may hold you responsible if a needy Muslim is not provided for because of your or your committee's lack of organization.

2. Prepare for emergencies

There are times when a person may need money immediately. They do not have the time to wait for the Zakat committee to sit down and do Shura (consult) about their case and how much they should be given.

In these time-sensitive cases, the president of the committee or the Imam of the mosque should have authority and power to give Zakat.

3. Remember that the needy are not just those who ask

You may have to seek out the needy yourself. The Quran specifically mentions such people, who, out of their modesty, do not ask others for help. These people cannot be expected to fill out a Zakat form at the Masjid, considering they probably have no desire to let anyone know about their situation.

Such individuals need to be sought out. The Imam and Zakat committee members should keep an eye out for those in need who may simply be too modest to speak up and ask for help.

4. Put yourself in their shoes

It feels great to give, but not so great to receive. Put yourself in the shoes of those who are seeking your help and treat them with the respect and compassion they deserve. If they are among those who don't ask for help, they are especially sensitive to displays of arrogance and condescension, which have no place in Islam. Practice the best way to approach a person in need so you can yield the most beneficial results.

5. Maintain confidentiality

Zakat should NEVER be given in a public way. For Zakat to thrive in your community, it is essential for the identities of both the one who donates Zakat and the one who receives it to be private.

Make sure that you do not disclose the names of those who have been given Zakat money, not even to your family members or best friends. This is wrong behavior and it is extremely hurtful and embarrassing to those who have received Zakat funds.

THE MASJID ZAKAT CLINIC

1. What Is a Zakat Clinic?

A program that offers collective as well as one-on-one advice regarding Zakat calculations, collections, distribution and accounting.

2. Who will offer the Zakat Clinic?

Masjids usually organize and offer Zakat Clinics. They should invite an Islamic scholar knowledgeable about Zakat and a CPA or an accounting expert (both guests can benefit from our Zakat FAQ, available with our Zakat Kit).

Or you can just invite Zakat Foundation to organize this clinic for you at your location by filling out our online request form. (Note: We will not be collecting Zakat, but merely helping Masjids organize their Clinic program).

3. What Zakat Clinic Programs include:

Zakat Clinics are “half-day” programs, and should try to be kept within a 4-5 hour time-frame. Our proposed program includes:

- Introduction, Recitation and Tafseer of select Quranic verses regarding Zakat (allotted time: 15 minutes).
- Collective reading of Hadith regarding Zakat (allotted time: 10 minutes).
- Speech based on Zakat FAQ (allotted time: 15 minutes).
- Q & A session (allotted time: 45 minutes). [Note: Allow for Q & A forum to be anonymous. Many attendees may not be comfortable admitting ignorance, or detailing their personal assets and expenses. Questions can be submitted to the scholar on a slip of paper to ensure anonymity of questioner.]
- One-on-one meetings by sign-up sheet appointment system (allotted time: 3 hours). This is a half-a-day program, try to limit it to four hours.
- Include a report of the Zakat collection by the Masjid's Zakat Committee, if possible.

Masjids organizing Zakat Clinics may also want to make Zakat-related items available. Many people learn best when they can read, take information home, and refer back to it at their leisure. Pamphlets, articles, and general handouts for all attendees are sure to be a success. Masjids could also offer to sell books about Zakat from the local Islamic bookstore.

4. Who should attend? Anybody! Zakat Committees should design a general, welcoming program.

5. How Masjids benefit from the Zakat Clinic

Giving Zakat may be an individual duty, but the fair collection and distribution of Zakat is a shared duty of the community. It is the duty of each Masjid to organize proper collection and disbursement of the Zakat to the poor. The Clinic will also contribute to the transparency of the Masjid's handling of Zakat funds, improving attendants' trust and relationship with the Masjid.

6. How attendees benefit from the Zakat Clinic

Attendees will not only be learning how to fulfill their Zakat duty and potentially reach out to their neighbors in need, but they will also have the opportunity to:

- Learn knowledge about Zakat and its importance from Quranic verses, Hadith and Sunnah.
- Learn how to handle their Zakat duty in the face of today's financial complexities.
- Learn that their Masjid is organizing Zakat properly and have a renewed sense of faith and trust in their Masjid.

ZAKAT CLINIC REQUEST FORM

A Zakat Clinic can be a very valuable source of information and help for the community, particularly those who need to learn more about Zakat in Islam and how to calculate Zakat. Though each Masjid is perfectly welcome to develop their own Zakat Clinic, Zakat Foundation is more than happy to come out and do the job for you. We are fully equipped to coordinate a top-rate Zakat Clinic program, including:

- An Islamic scholar who is an expert in Zakat
- A CPA or accounting expert, who also has thorough Zakat knowledge
- One-on-one Zakat advice between attendant and scholar, accountant
- Literature—programs, brochures, articles—on Zakat that will be helpful to community members
- A khutbah/speech on Zakat
- Discussion of Zakat duty in Quran and Hadith
- You can fill out the following form to request Zakat Foundation's help organizing your next Zakat Clinic.

Name of Masjid _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

Web site _____

E-mail _____

Name of Masjid President _____

Name of Masjid's Imam _____

Preferred dates for Zakat Clinic (Provide three) _____

Exact location of where Zakat Clinic is to be held _____

Expected number of attendees _____

Does your Masjid have a Zakat Committee? If so, how many members are in it? _____

WHEN COMPLETED EITHER:

Mail this form to P.O. Box 639, Worth, IL, 60482 OR

e-mail this information to info@zakat.org

A Zakat Foundation Representative will be in touch with you soon to coordinate the next steps.