

## ALMSGIVING

## ṢADAQA

This entry comprises the following sections: i. Meaning and Usage; ii. Conditions for Divine Acceptance of Alms; iii. Secret and Public Almsgiving; iv. Virtues and Benefits of Almsgiving; v. Perpetual Works of *Ṣadaqa* and *Waqf* Endowments; vi. *Ṣadaqa* in the Generic Sense; vii. Bibliography.

*Ṣadaqa* can refer either to alms or the act of almsgiving: the voluntary expenditure of one's valued possessions. Understood ethically, *ṣadaqa* plays an important role in the cultivation of the virtues of abstinence (*q.v.*), gratitude (*q.v.*), generosity (*q.v.*), and overcoming avarice and greed (*q.v.*). It is a manifestation of the belief, at the level of *īmān* (faith), that what is given away for the sake of Allah earns an abiding, and greater, reward in the hereafter (Q 73:20; al-Haytamī, *al-Ināfa fī-l-ṣadaqa wal-diyāfa*, p. 27-61). The term *ṣadaqa* in certain contexts may refer to a broader spectrum of noble actions and behaviors (see REWARD AND PUNISHMENT).

## Meaning and Usage

Idiomatically, the noun *ṣadaqa* (pl. *ṣadaqāt*) means “that which is given for the sake of Allah” (Ibn Sida, *Muḥkam, sub ṣ-d-q*). It stems from the root *ṣ-d-q*, which denotes being true in strength and virtue, evenness and straightness (*ṣalb, mustawī*), and also means “complete” or “perfect” (*kāmil*) (al-Ṣāghānī, *al-‘Ubāb*; Fayrūzābādī, *Qāmūs*). According to Ibn Barrī al-Miṣrī (499-582/1106-1186), Ibn Durustawayh (258-347/872-958) glossed it as “combining those qualities that are commendable,” stating that it could describe a human object or a non-human one such as a spear (*al-Tanbīh wal-īdāh*). The phrase *ṣadaqa al-ṣubḥ* (“the morning is true”) refers to the morning shining true and bright. Because the root implies correctness, perfection, and clarity, the word *ṣidq* denotes truthfulness, primarily in speech, regardless of tense and whether it is presented in an informative, interrogative, or implicative mode. It is thus the antonym of falsehood and untruth (*kidhb*). It also denotes harmony of the inner self (*bāṭin*) with outer actions (*zāhir*) as well as a concordance of attestations with deeds, as in *Among the believers are men who are true (rijālun ṣadaqū) to the covenant they made with Allah* (Q 33:23), and the usage *ṣadaqūhum al-qitāl* (“they battled against them earnestly”) that is, not from false bravado. *Ṣidq* also implies sincerity and integrity, as in the usage *ṣadaqahu al-naṣiḥa wal-ikhāʿ* (“he truly/sincerely rendered to him good advice and brotherly affection”) (Zabīdī and Rāghib). When

its second radical is vocalized with the short vowel *u* (*ṣaduqa*), it means “dowry”, as in its Qur’ānic usage *And give women their dowries (ṣaduqātihinna) cheerfully* (Q 4:4). This derivation implies the gravity of this obligation and its inseparability from the marriage contract (Nawawī, *Tahdhīb*).

As mentioned above, *ṣadaqa* is often used to refer to alms, meaning the act of spending wealth or giving something material for the sake of gaining reward (*thawāb, mathūba*). In juridical terms this spending may be classified as obligatory (*wājib*), as in *zakāt* (*q.v.*), or supererogatory (*nafl*), as is explained below. Used in this sense, *ṣadaqa* does not apply to deeds performed or wealth spent for the purpose of honoring someone (e.g., entertaining a guest or offering a gift) (al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf* 3:64 and al-Nawawī, *al-Majmūʿ* 1:1391).

The nominal form of the word *ṣadaqa*, along with its plural *ṣadaqāt* and active participle *mutaṣaddiq/muṣṣaddiq*, is used fifteen times in the Qur’ān. The verbal form (*taṣaddaqa, iṣṣaddaqa*) is used five times. While frequently denoting alms in Qur’ānic diction, the word has also been used to indicate other meanings such as acts of sympathy and expiation (*kaffāra*) (*q.v.*). Contextual examples of its various Qur’ānic usages follow below.

## Alms—Compulsory and Supererogatory

- *The [prescribed] alms (ṣadaqāt) are only for the poor, the needy, those employed to collect them, those whose hearts are to be won over, in the cause of slaves and those encumbered with debt, in the way of Allah, and to wayfarers* (Q 9:60); *Take from their wealth [obligatory] alms (ṣadaqatan) through which you cleanse and purify them, and pray for them* (Q 9:103).

*Ṣadaqa* in both of these verses refers to *zakāt*, the obligatory alms. Al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī (d. ca.502/1108) explains that one giving *zakāt* should intend to attain the quality of *ṣidq* through fulfilling this obligation, as opposed to having ostentatious motives or expressing favors upon those to whom one has given (*Mufradāt*). Al-Qurṭubī (600-671/1204-1273) states that whenever the word *ṣadaqa* is used non-specifically (*matā uṭliqat*) in the Qur’ān it refers to compulsory alms (*sub* Q 9:60). Al-Māwardī (364-450/974-1058) suggests an even broader usage, declaring that “*zakāt* is *ṣadaqa*, and *ṣadaqa* is *zakāt*. The terms differ, but the meaning is the same” (*al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya*, al-bāb al-ḥādī ‘ashar fī wilāyat al-ṣadaqāt). The term *ṣadaqa* has both obligatory and supererogatory meanings in the Qur’ān, as established in Makkān and