

Friday Khutbah
Zakat 2: Wisdom, Reasons for Refusal to pay it & Consequences
18/01/2013

Allah (*subanahu wa ta'ala*) legislated Zakat and made an obligation upon Muslim to be taken from the rich and given to the poor. Thus Zakat is not a favour by the rich upon the poor; rather it is the right of the poor in the wealth of the rich, which in reality belongs to Allah and man is only a trustee of it. Allah (*subanahu wa ta'ala*) says in *Surat an-Nur*: “And give them from the wealth of Allah which He has given you.” He says in *Surat al-Hadeed*: “And spend (in charity) out of that (wealth) in which He has appointed you as deputies..”

The Muslim looks at Zakat as being an act of *Ibadah* (worship) of Allah (*subanahu wa ta'ala*) by which he draws himself closer to Him, and he happily pays it. He does not see it as money lost. He is certain that Zakat blesses wealth and causes it to grow. This is one of the wisdoms and benefits of Zakat.

ii) Another wisdom and benefit is that: Zakat purifies the soul from greed and excessive love of money. Allah says in *Surat al-Tubah*: “Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them to increase..”

iii) Zakat narrows the gap between rich and poor, cleans the hearts of the poor from resentment and ill-feeling towards the rich and brings love and affection between them. This is a major factor in enhancing social security and in combating crime.

We know that many revolutions in human history were caused by poverty and hunger, and it is to avoid social unrest (and for other good reasons as well) that contemporary governments provide welfare assistance for those without regular income.

So, in the legislation of Zakat there is a solution for poverty and the problems associated with it. This would be the case if the wealthy pay their Zakat; however it is stinginess that causes the problems for them (the rich) and for others. It is for this reason that the Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) warned severely against stinginess in the *Hadith*: “Avoid injustice because it will be darkness on the day of Judgement and avoid stinginess because stinginess destroyed those before you. It led them to spill their blood and to violate their sanctities.”

And had Muslims paid their Zakat then there would be no poor person in the Muslim world; however, many of them have become miser refusing to pay their Zakat.

So, stinginess is the main reason for people not paying their Zakat especially those who are wealthy. One of them would calculate his Zakat and when he finds it to be a large amount; he considers it too much to pay! But he at the same time does not take consideration of the substantial wealth that he has; of which Zakat is only one fortieth. He would recall how he had worked very hard to get this money but he would forget that Allah had given him *Tawfiq* (success) in his effort and that many other people did work hard as well but did not make money as he did.

Some people would taste the sweetness of wealth after years of deprivation and the honour of wealth after the humiliation of poverty. During their days of deprivation they would wish to have wealth so that they would spend it in good causes. However, once they have money they change – and many changes many people! They would forget and go back on their promise and refuse to give the right of Allah in their

wealth. Thus they fall into the trap of hypocrisy without realising. The words of Allah (*subanahu wa ta'ala*) revealed regarding one of the hypocrite during the time of the Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) will become true in their case. "And among them there are those who made a pledge with Allah: If He gives us (wealth) out of His grace, then, surely we shall give charity and shall be among the righteous. But when He gave them (wealth) out of His grace, they became stingy about it, and went back turning their faces away. So Allah, in turn, put hypocrisy in their hearts till the day they shall meet Him, because they broke their promise with Allah, and because they have been telling lies."

Some people use a deceptive method to avoid Zakat by spending their money in buying property and the likes just before the time of paying their Zakat. A Muslim should be careful not to use such a method to avoid Zakat because Allah knows what is in his heart.

ii) One of the reasons for some people not paying their Zakat is ignorance such as a middle class man not paying his Zakat thinking that it is only rich people who should pay Zakat. He/she does not know that once a person owns the *Nisab* he must pay Zakat. Ignorance is not an excuse in such an important matter as Zakat. The cure of ignorance is questioning and obtaining knowledge.

iii) One of the causes of some people not paying their Zakat is procrastination (putting off paying it every time.) Because one is busy and has too many sources of income, he postpones the calculation of his Zakat until one or two years pass by without him paying his Zakat. If this person cares about his Deen as he cares about his business, then he would have paid Zakat on time.

The punishment for not paying Zakat: I mentioned in last week's *Khutbah* the consensus of the *Sahaba* and the Imam after them that those who refuse to pay their Zakat should be fought against even if they pray the five daily prayers and fast the month of Ramadan. As for the punishment in the *Aakhirah*, Allah says in *Surat al-Tubah*: "As for those who accumulate gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah, give them the news of a painful punishment, On the day it (the wealth) will be heated up in the fire of Jahannam, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with it: This is what you had accumulated for yourselves. So, taste what you have been accumulating."

In the Hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) said: "For the one who refuses to pay his Zakat, his wealth will turn into a snake on the day of Judgement and it will embrace him and encircle him around his neck, (Imagine a huge snake embracing one!)"

Second Part

Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an the eight categories of people who are entitled to receive Zakat. He says (*subanahu wa ta'ala*) "As-Sadaqât (meaning Zakât here) are only for the *Fuqarâ'* (poor), and *Al-Masâkin* (the needy) and to those employed to collect it ; to those whose hearts are to be (reconciled) won , and to free the captives; and for those in debt; for Allâh's Cause and for the wayfarer - a duty imposed by Allâh. And Allâh is Knower, Wise."

- i) The first category of people entitled for Zakat is *al-Faqir*, the poor who do not have food, clothing and the rest of the necessities.
- ii) *Al-Miskeen* or the needy. Is the one who has something but not enough. He is relatively better than *al-Faqir*.
- iii) Those who collect and administer it. It is not necessary that they should be poor in order to be given Zakat,
- iv) Those whose hearts are to be reconciled (won.) This includes a *Kafir* who is to be given Zakat in the hope that he becomes a Muslim and a Muslim who is to be given Zakat in the hope that his Iman becomes strong.
- v) To free the captive, a slave who is to pay for his freedom.
- vi) For those in debt: A person who took a loan and was then unable to repay it. This person should be given from Zakat if the thing for which he had taken a loan was necessary. If he had taken a loan to buy a land or a car or something not necessary, he does not deserve to be given from Zakat.
- vii) For Allah's cause: the Mujahidoon and those guarding the Muslims' frontiers.
- viii) For the wayfarer: The traveller who is cut off from his homeland. He is entitled to be given what he needs to return to his country.