

THE VIEWS OF ISLAMIC SCHOLARS ON THE RECIPIENTS OF ZAKAT; A THEORETICAL EXPLORATION

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ABSTRACT

This write up is aimed at identifying the aims and objectives of the recipients of Zakat otherwise known as Masarif al-Zakat in Arabic language as they are being detailed in the Glorious Qur'an. However, the writer in this write up make an attempt to illustrate and shade more light on different views advanced by the jurists in Islam with regards to the status of each and every one among those recipients of the Zakat and manner of sharing the Zakat among the seven mentioned beneficiaries of Zakat.

Keywords: Zakat, Recipients, views, Scholars, Muslims.

Therefore, there is a cogent need for a Muslim to critically know all about the recipients of Zakat as they are, in order to avoid channeling it to wrong places. In line with this, this research is set out to explore views the Muslim scholar on the channels of Zakat in other to see where there are some disagreements between the scholars and to possibly indicate what seem to be the right opinions.

Introduction:

Zakat is without doubt one of the most important component of the Islamic religion and of cause one of the five pillars upon which Islamic is established (Bin Isma il, Vol.1 12) Each and every Muslim who passed a certain prescribed amount of wealth property is obliged under the banner of Muslim to give out a particular potion of it which must be channeled to a particular end; clearly denied by Islam known as (masarif al Zakat) or otherwise the recipients of zakat. Zakat will be considered null and void I deliberately or out o carelessness or lack of thorough examination channeled to any other designation than the ones prescribed by Allah (S W T) in thie Glorious Qur'an (Bin al Ash'ath,, Vol.2.37)

This research deals with the following subheading:

1. Definition of terms
2. The position of Zakat in Islam.
3. Islamic ruling concerning one who refuses to pay Zakat
4. The recipients of Zakat in the glorious Qur'an
5. Scholars views on the recipients of Zakat.
6. Sharing Zakat.
7. Conclusion.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

a- Zakat this is an Arabic word derived from the word: zakkat, yuzakki, zakatan which according to scholars literally means to grow up technically means development, be it a physical one or just a symbolic one like a development in one's belief (Iman).

b. Zakat technically means to give out a particular portion from a particular property to a particular person or channels based on particular conditions. (Wazarat al Auqaf, Vol. 23.312)

c. Masarif: it is a plural of masraf which can literally mean a channel. Masarif al-zakat therefore technically refers to those eight designated channels of zakat mentioned in the glorious Qur'an (Muhammad, Vol. 2. 152)

THE POSITION OF ZAKAT IN ISLAM

Zakat is obligatory upon each and every individual Muslim who has a property according to the legal stipulations of ownership in Islam. (Jabir, 214) However zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam, the obligatory of zakat is proved by the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the consensus of the Muslim jurists (Ijma) As to the glorious Qur'an, the zakat is made mention connected with prayer (Salat) in eighty two different places, in addition to other places where it is mentioned alone here are some two or three examples: Allah says:

Of their wealth, take alms, that so thou might be purified and sanctify them and pray on their behalf....(Qur'an 9. 103)

Another verse: O ye Who believe spend out (of the bounty) we have provided for you (Qur'an 2.245).

And establish regular prayer and give regular charity (Qur'an 73 20)

However, there are a number of prophetic traditions (hadiths) in connection with zakat and its position in Islam; here are some of them The prophet may the peace

and blessing of Allah be upon him says Islam is based on five pillars to testify that none has the right to be worshiped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's apostle perform the prayer to pay zakat to perform pilgrimage and to fast Ramadan (Bin Isma'il, Vol.1. 12)

However the prophet was once sent Mu'adh bin Jabal to Yemen and gave him the following injunction ; You will meet the people of the earlier scriptures (the Jews and the Christians) you should invite first to testify that none has the right to be worship but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's apostle, so if they accept, inform them that Allah enjoined them to perform five daily prayers, if they accept that inform that Allah enjoined them to pay an alms from their properties which will be taken from the rich ones among them, if they accept that them, if they accept that, you should avoid their best properties and should also avoid the complains of the unjustly treated, for there is no any barrier between it and Allah. (Bin Isma'il, vol. 2. 544).

Above are really enough evidences that justify the obligatory of paying Zakat in Islam.

ISLAMIC RULING CONCERNING THE ONE WHO REFUSED TO PAY ZAKAT

Anyone who deliberately withholds Zakat of his property of any kind, after he must have attained all the conditions of paying it as they are well defined in the books of Islamic jurisprudence, such a person is unanimously considered a nonbeliever; Allah refers to him as someone who associated Him with others in worship (Mushrik) Allah says: "Say thou I am but a man like you it is reviled to me by inspiration that your God is one God, so take the straight path onto Him and ask for His forgiveness. 7 And woe to those who joined gods with Allah. Those who refuse to pay Zakat and who even deny the hereafter". (Qur'an, 41:6-7).

THE RECIPIENTS OF ZAKAT IN THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN

The primary and basic information concerning the recipients of Zakat is found in the Glorious Qur'an were the Almighty Allah mentioned eight categories of the recipient of Zakat; thus, He says: "Arms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer it, and for those whose hearts are to be won, for those in bondage and in debt, and the cause of Allah and for the wayfarer (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom". (Qur'an, 9:60).

Listed below are the recipients of Zakat as they are itemized in the verse above in their original Arabic terms:

1. al-Fukara': the poor
2. al- Masikin: the needies
3. al-Ailina alaiha: the employees on the Zakat
4. al-Mu'allafatu Qulubuhum: Those whose heart are to be won
5. al-Riqab: Those in bondage
6. al-Gharimin: those in dept
7. Fi sabil al-Allah: in the cause of Allah
8. Ibn al-Sabil: the wayfarer

SCHOLARS' VIEWS ON THE RECIPIENTS OF ZAKAT

In analyzing the above mentioned beneficiaries of Zakat, a lot of arguments were advanced by different Muslim scholars, and hence many opinions have emerged concerning some aspects of the recipients; this subheading will treat them one after the other as follows:

a- The number one aspect is about the concept of Faqir and that of Miskin; some scholars are on the opinion that the two of them are poor but the condition of Faqir is more favorable than that of Miskin; among the scholars who maintained this view include Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik; they used mainly logical and linguistic evidences to justify their opinion. (Wazaratu al-Auqaf, Vol. 2 318).

Imam al-Shafi'i and Imam bin Hambal on the other hand, maintained that the financial condition of al-Miskin is better than that of the Faqir; the cited the a verse of the Glorious Qur'an to support their point; that Almighty Allah has mentioned the Masakin in the Qur'an and He has attributed the ownership of a ship to them which impliedly indicates that they must have a little with which they manage their affairs, unlike the Faqir who has nothing at all. (Jamil,50). In the general sense, the two mentioned categories are having one thing in common, ie limited capacity of income, but to some extent, the second view is likely the right one because of the clear context of the verse they used in supporting their own view.

However, there is third view which shows that the two terms: Fuqara and Masakin stand for one and the same thing all together. (Wazarat al-Aqaf, vol. 23. 318).

Moreover, Zakat should not be given to Masakin or Fuqara so long as they are physically feat to struggle and meet up their basic demands. (Bin al-As'ath, vol. 2. 37).

- b- al-Amilina alaiha: The employees onthhe Zakat: there is no much different views with regard to this point; scholars are on agreement that a person employed to work the Zakat administration, will be paid from it, regardless of his financial status; rich or poor. (Muslim, vol. 2. 118).
- c- al-Mu'allafatu Qulubuhum: Those whose heart are to be won: this include a non-Muslim who is expected to accept Islam, or he has already embraced it but he is not yet got firm in it; zakat can be given to such person in order to entertain him, however, a person capable of harming Muslims can also be given from zakat if doing so can prevent him harms, more so, a weak hearted Muslim can also be given from zakat in order to get him encouraged to his commitment to Islam; the only condition worthy of noting here is that all of them must be a notable individuals in their communities. (Jamil, 52).
The only area of dispute among scholars on this issue is whether or not this category of people can still be given zakat after the consolidation of Islam. (Wazarat al-Auqaf, vol. 23.317).
- d- al-Riqab: Those in bondage: this one also include freeing of slaves who are already under agreement to get free and even those who are under the same agreements will also be considered in order to get them free, the third one is freeing the Muslim war captives who are under the custody of their enemies. (Jamil, 52).
- e- al-gharimin: Those in debt: the scholars have mentioned here three types of debts; one is a person indebted for the cause of his personal and lawful matters. The second one is a person indebted for the cause of settling disputes among people or group of people; according to some scholars, if someone shoulders another person's financial burden's in order to his life or property, that can also be settled from zakat(Wazarat al-Auqar, vol. 23. 317). Third one is a person being indebted for an unlawful mission, in this scholars agreed that zakat will not be spent on his cause. (Jamil, 53).
- f- Fi sabil al-Allah: In the cause of Allah: This includes taking care of soldiers who participates in wars but without a fix compensations from the State's treasury, hence as for those who have a fix salaries from Islamic State are not expected to gain from zakat, however, some scholars considered pilgrimage

(hajj) as fisabil al-Allah) too, in such case, zakat fund could be used to sponsor people who want to perform hajj. (obcit).

- g- Ibn al-Sabil: the wayfarer: this is a person who is away from his residential town in a lawful mission, if such a person found himself in shot of money and he has nobody from whom he will be able to borrow some until he went back home, he will benefit from zakat with the exact amount that will support his condition. (Jabir, 246).

SHARING ZAKAT

In this topic, sharing the zakat among those mentioned channels will be treated; the area of scholars' concentration here is on whether the zakat can be given to one category of the recipients alone or it must be equally shared among the eight mentioned recipients at the same time; according to Imam Shafi'i, it must be shared among all the channels, while Imam Malik and Abu Hanifah in the other hand, maintained the opinion that the Imam or the Muslims leader has authority to give the zakat to any of the mentioned recipients or some of them according to the demand and the condition. (Ibn Rushd, 219).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This research has unveiled that Islam has given proper care to those people with special need especially financial problems; in line with this, the research at the end recommends that there should be proper enlightenment of the Muslim Umma in terms of paying Zakat so that poverty would be reduced to minimal level in our communities.

CONCLUSION

This paper has treated the views of Islamic scholars on the matter of the stipulated recipients of zakat (Masarif al-Zakat) the paper has studied among other things: the definition of zakat both literal and technical them some light have been shed on the importance of zakat, and the Islamic position on the person who withhold zakat, and finally the paper has dig into the opinions of the Muslim jurists on the recipients of zakat, thus the areas where the scholars agreed and where they disagreed too are all made clear.

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