

Zakah the purifier of wealth

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The following is an article (to the nearest meaning) written after a lecture given by Shaykh Habibur Rahman at Baitul Hikmah's Fiqh of Fasting and Zakah course held on 1st August 2009 at Madani Girls School

All praise be to Allah, Lord of all the worlds and peace and blessings upon the final Messenger Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)

The issue of Zakah was present with other nations and Prophets including the Banu Isra'il, so it is not something new to us. It was even present with Isa (as) and his nation.

Like Salah is the purification of our nafs (soul) likewise Zakah is the purification of our wealth. Hence they are both part of the five pillars of Islam so performing Zakah will strengthen the pillars.

Why Zakah?

If you look at every order and command of Allah it is always beneficial. Allah is so powerful and mighty that He doesn't require our favours. He is not in need of our worship towards him and for definite he is not in need of our wealth.

Therefore everything of the order of Allah is a benefit for us all. For example when we fast it is for the benefit of our body. 1,400 years ago this order was made, now scientists have discovered the benefits fasting gives to our body.

Zakah is not an optional act, if it was, our wealth would be harmful to us because we will distance ourselves from making our Zakah payment. Similarly with Salah if it was optional we would not pray at all.

During my childhood I only heard of few organisations collecting Zakah or Sadaqah payments now I see many more, yet we still hear the cry of the Ummah. There are people who are unable to eat everyday, they are finding it difficult to get their loved ones married off and the list goes on.

We need to make sure our Zakah is being paid in the right manner according to the rules of Qur'an and Sunnah.

Recently on a visit to Bangladesh I happened to see a lot of children not attending schools. I asked their parents as to why they didn't go to school, they said that they can't even afford to provide food and thinking of schools is just a dream.

People get amazed when they hear that they have to pay so much when their Zakah is being calculated. That is what happens if we do not pay on time.

We need to be grateful to Allah that he didn't make us poor as many people are around the world. To show gratitude we must make these Zakah payments.

By keeping our wealth to us, we discover later on that we have made various losses, it is until then that we say to ourselves, had we made our Zakah and Sadaqah payments. The poorer people would have benefited. By giving Zakah and Sadaqah it wouldn't decrease our wealth rather it would increase our wealth.

If we look at the Sahabah we would find that they did competitions in extra worship and actions. We must take them as examples.

An advice to our sisters that the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) emphasised on women to make a habit of these practises as it would benefit them. We know of how he saw Jahannam during Miraj and saw many women in the fire.

May Allah make it easy for all of us in keeping up to these practises, Amin