



Importance of ZAKAT in the Establishment of the Society

Akhtar Hussain

Centre Manager CSRL GHY Centre, India.

Abdullah

Research Scholar, Dept. of Mass Communication. Assam University, Assam.

ABSTRACT

Wealth is a most important thing to lead the life peacefully, fulfil the needs and wants, meet other obligatory rights and it plays a significant role for the people specifically for the believers to earn either Heaven or Hell in the earth.

In another way Wealth is an "Amanat" from Almighty Allah (a trust that is entrusted to the individual). According to ISLAM mankind will have to account for the wealth that Allah has entrusted to them in the hereafter.

In fact, the acquisition of wealth is one of the basic concerns and demands of mankind for survival (for food, shelter and cloth). Wealth-gathering is important for surviving, but it must be subject to the law of moral. Without the law of moral, human life sinks to the level of being oriented around money and could lead to moral decadence. Wealth-gathering is a legitimate activity as long as it does not entail theft, cheating, coercion, Riba (usury), or harming of others.

Zakat is an important system of Islamic ideology therefore it plays an active role in establishment of spiritual and social life of the society. The payment of Zakat is mandatory and obligatory for every Muslim whose wealth exceeds the prescribed limit. The system of Zakat is an important source of the stability of the society. The system of Zakat ensures proper distribution of wealth and has wide impact on the entire set up of the society. If Bait-ul-Mal is established as an institution, it will create a collective social security scheme for mutual help and the resources can be further utilized for social development. This research paper is focused on to explicate the significance of Zakat as an institution and to elaborate the impact of Zakat on social life of Muslim society.

KEYWORDS : Zakat, Amanah, Riba, Shariah

Introduction:

Man cannot live without society, because man is a social animal, so that all religions, whether, heavenly or man-made, and all social systems came forward to teach the people as to how to live with peace, harmony and respect with others.

Islam wants to establish such society where social justice and distributional equity would prevail so that a section of the society does not discriminate and prosper at the expense of the rest of the society.

It is very fact that the wealth has been created for the benefit of the whole of humanity without any discrimination of religion, cast, class, and creed. In societies where individuals are deprived and usurped of the wealth bestowed by God, the existence of social classes is tolerated and the scorn of the rich towards the poor is sustained, riches never bring true happiness; on the contrary, financial resource easily becomes a profound source of conflict, even within families and close-knit groups.

The Strong institution and distribution of Zakat explicitly creates a virtuous setting that eliminates various social problems by establishing a harmonious atmosphere for both the rich and the poor.

The proper collection and distribution of zakat reduces, or eradicates social conflicts, strengthens the growth of the middle class, weaker section and prevents all of the greatest social diseases related to financial issues, especially interest and money-hoarding.

The word Zakat means purification and growth. Holly Quran says:

"Take from their wealth so that you might purify and sanctify hem"

Zakat purifies the soul of the giver from selfishness and greed and cleans his wealth from a portion specified for the unfortunate. Though, payment of Zakat apparently decreases money but, in broader sense, it causes circulation of wealth, which results in its multiplication and thus involves more and more people in its benefits.

Zakat is obligatory on every Muslims men and women who possess a specified limit of wealth, to pay each year a prescribed portion from capital or savings like farm produce, cattle, business activities, paper currency and gold and silver.

Zakat has been mentioned in the Holy Quran more than eighty times. The institution of *Zakah* is undoubtedly one of the most important and very significant aspects of the Islamic economy. This is perhaps because *Zakah* is one of the five principal pillars of Islam along with *Shahadah* (declaration of faith), *Salat* (daily prayers)

Allah says in the Holy Quran.

"So establish Salat and give Zakat, and hold fast to Allah".

"*Zakat* is the bridge of Islam" used for abolishing the economic gaps and passing over economic strife between rich and poor of the society. This bridge also constructs a stable middle class through which increasingly more recipients of *zakat* can become its donors and a possible clash between the rich and the poor is prevented.

The establishment and maintenance of social solidarity is maximized when the gap between social classes is kept at a minimum and the voids likely to cause social conflicts are filled. In other terms, relations between the rich and the poor must not deteriorate if anarchy is to be avoided. Undoubtedly, the most important power that upholds these crucial relations between the rich and the poor is *zakat* and other principles of assistance.

Importance of Zakat in Broad Prospects:

Human being cannot live without society and society cannot develop or prosper until and unless it has a strong and viable economy. The poor and the destitute people can fall easy prey to a lot of social evils in order to make the two ends meet. Whereas, financially stable people have the courage to stand against social pressure. Some of the social problems resulting from poor economic conditions are given below:

1. Illiteracy:

Illiteracy is like cancer for the society and due to lack of wealth the poor families far away to educate their children. Child labour is the result of poor economic condition and caused many problem for the society, where the live in.

2. Gap between Rich and Poor:

A good relation between the rich and the poor is most important for the development of the society. But due to imbalance distribution of wealth the differences between the above classes are getting maxi-

mized. Undoubtedly, the most important power that upholds these crucial relations between the rich and the poor is *zakat and Sadaqah*.

In societies where *zakat* exists, the precipice between the rich and the poor widens to the effect where xenophobia and hatred replace love and appreciation for the poor.

3. Increasing Crime rate:

Poverty and economic recession leads the society towards crime and anti-social activity. Poor people in order to maintain their social needs they involve in crimes like theft, robbery gambling etc. The feeling of deprivation caused to bloodshed and political upheavals.

Islam provides an apt opportunity for the unemployed and weaker section to establish own enterprise; Zakat brings them back into society, stronger than ever, instead of deserting them to become burdens of the community. The strengthening of the middle class in Islam is not encouraged just through zakat and Sadaqa.

SOCIAL BENEFITS OF ZAKAT

1. Promoting self-respect:

Self-respect is more valuable than wealth. If wealthy people paying Zakat they are just performing their duty assigned by Almighty Allah. The beauty of Zakat is that this is obligatory for the Muslims but others also can be benefited from this. The affluent people are not doing any favour on the poor and the destitute. If everyone pays Zakat from among the haves, no poor and the unfortunate would

Have to resort to begging. Now-a-days, we find beggary as a menace facing many societies. Islam on one hand, ordered the affluent to care about the destitute and, on the other, prohibited the poor and the needy from stretching hands before others. Narrates Abu Huraira (RA) that the holy Prophet said:-

"Whoever begs from people so as to accumulate more riches, he is asking for a live coal (fire) from Hell, so let him ask for a lot or little"

2. Rotation of Wealth:

Zakat keeps wealth in rotation and thus it benefits the whole society. Once the Holy Prophet (SAW) advised Mua'az bin Jabal (RA) while he was proceeding to Yaman that:

"Teach them that Almighty Allah has made it obligatory for them to pay the Zakat from their property and it is to be taken from the wealthy among them and given to the poor"

If proper Zakat system is established in the society it will help a lot not only in decreasing poverty but also strengthening the society. Zakat brings the people closer to each other and ensures real brotherhood in the true sense of the word and spirit. The holy Quran has made performance of 'Salat' and payment of 'Zakat' both as pre-requisites of Islamic brotherhood.

3. Peace and Prosperity

Zakat ensures social justice by bringing financial balance among various strata of society. It decreases the crime rate and terrorist inclinations among the society members. Thus the whole society strives together and achieves development and prosperity. Equal distribution of wealth curtails the rate of unemployment and reduces chances of economic recession.

4. Promoting Morality:

This is very fact that Zakat instils moral qualities and moral development and uprightness in man. According to the Islamic economists, one of the most important roles of Zakat in the Islamic economic order is that it "washes away the greed and acquisitiveness of the rich", thereby seeking to undermine the excessive and over-zealous wealth accumulative attitude of some elements of the society. Man by nature is a selfish and greedy creature, and as such is rarely content with his lot. The more man is given, the more he craves for. In short, his insatiable self knows no bounds.

In fact the benefits of Zakat do not end there. Among the many other benefits of Zakat are that it is a social insurance on public life, an aura maintaining tolerance between social groups, a catalyst that puts fire in the economic life and a balancing factor that emphasizes both the importance of worldly earnings and the eternal importance of life in the eternal resort.

Each aspect which has been described above, as one may guess, is also a positive step towards building an unshakeable social structure. Moreover, the totality constitutes a prelude to the prime barrier for the formation of a harmonious atmosphere within societies is the existence of social classes based on wealth. It is self-evident that it is impossible for the destitute to nurture love for the rich in a society where they are turned a blind eye on. As prevalent experience has shown, such a society is destined to become a hotbed for social conflict.

Conclusion:

Zakat moulds the individuals into responsible and caring persons. It inculcates the spirit of goodwill, cooperation and brotherhood in upholding social solidarity in the society. It is very much cleared and proved that the System of Zakat plays effective and successful role in developing the social life and moral values of the society.

It must be clear that Zakat is a portion of a charity system of Islam, otherwise, there is a good range of 'Sadaqat' i.e those alms which are not compulsory. They can play Miracles if properly institutionalized by the state.

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