

Reminder that Zakah is obligatory

Friday Khutbah (31st August 2007) delivered by Shaykh Muhammad Taher

DISCLAIMER: This reminder was originally delivered in Arabic. Any meanings lost in translation are not to be attributed to the speaker as reminders are translated by volunteers. The mosque has no official translator and volunteers often have no formal qualifications to translate on the day. Please forgive any errors as they are from our human weakness and any right guidance is from Allah.

The Qur'an informs us of a group from the people of misery and loss – who have lost their own selves and their families on the Day of Judgment. How they will cry on the Day of Gathering saying:

"Woe to me, would that I had not been given my Book of Deeds, nor known what my account was! Would that my death had ended all! My wealth had availed me nothing, and my authority has gone away from me." [Surah Haqqah v25-29]
Thereafter the judgement of Allah, the Most Just, descends:

We shall say: "Seize him and put a chain around his neck, then cast him in the blazing fire, then fasten him with a chain seventy cubits long."

But why is he being punished so? Allah Almighty goes on to inform us:

"For he did not believe in Allah, the Most High, nor did he care to feed the poor" (30-34)

It was these terrifying verses that made Abu Darda' comment on them to his wife and described the chains that are prepared to be hung around the necks of people. He emphasised that although faith may save them partially, it was the giving to the poor that went hand in hand with that and was just as important.

O Muslims, Zakah [is a duty enjoined by God upon Muslims as a purification to distribute a portion of their wealth in the interest of society as a whole]. It is an obligation, which many forget and are heedless of - including those who are rich businessmen. The noble Qur'an mentions that Zakah is obligatory many times and frequently links this to prayer indicating its great value. Indeed Allah has made it a condition of faith and has made leaving it from amongst the acts of one who associates partnership to Allah and those who do not recognise the Hereafter. Allah SWT compares Zakah and Eeman/Faith in the following verse of the Qur'an

"My mercy encompasses everything. I will ordain special mercy for those who do righteous deeds, pay Zakah and believe in Our revelations." [Surah A'raf v156]

Indeed successful are those believers
who are humble in their Salah (prayers),
who avoid vain talk [&]
who are punctual in the payment of Zakah
(charity) "" [Surah Mu'minun v1-4]

Elsewhere in the Qur'an, He SWT likened the abandoning of Zakah to a failure to uphold the oneness of Allah and acting as though there was no Hereafter –

“” And woe to those who join gods with Allah. Those who do not practice Regular Charity”
[Surah Fussilat v6, 7]

“Have you seen the one who denies the Day of Judgment? He it is who drives away the orphan with harshness and does not encourage the feeding of the poor” [Surah Ma’un v1-3]

It is as though the one who withholds the giving Zakah does not believe in Allah or the Hereafter; if he did believe, and then he would abide by the instructions of his Lord. For this reason, the Prophet (pbuh) said: Giving in charity is a proof (As-Sadaqatu burhaan).

i.e. it is a clear evidence pointing to the faith of a servant.

Allah Almighty says:

“However, if they repent, establish Salah and pay Zakah, then they shall be your brethren in faith”
[Surah Tawba v11]

These matters that have been mentioned: repentance, establishing the prayer and paying the Zakah are from amongst the greatest signs of faith and outward submission.

The one who does not give out his Zakah is considered a thief- a thief of the worst and most hated kind on earth. This is how a wealthy person may steal from one who is poor- the owners of wealth who forget the obligation that Allah Almighty has decreed but still seek to avoid any form of stealing have in fact escaped from ‘open/public theft but only to commit secret theft by failing to paying their Zakah. The poor have a right on wealth.

Allah the Most High says:

“And in their wealth and possessions (was remembered) the right of the (needy) him who asked for it and him who did not ask.” [Adh-Dharyat v19]

“You shall give to your relatives their due and to the needy and to the wayfarers.” [Israa v26]

Allah says regarding the Zakah on crops:

“Eat of their fruit when it comes to fruition, and give to the poor their dues on harvest day.”
[An’aam v141]

The one who prevents the right of Allah and the poor, on the wealth that he has accrued, the wealth that Allah has given him- is fairly deserving of penalties in both this worldly life and the hereafter.

As for the punishment of this life, it is recorded in Al-Bayhaqi and Al-Hakim:

"A people do not keep from giving the zakah on their wealth except that they will be kept from having rain from the sky.

In another narration it adds:

"A people do not keep from giving the zakah on their wealth except that they will be kept from having rain from the sky. If it were not for the animals, it would not rain at all". (Ibn Maajah)

Not giving Zakah is a reason for the prevention of goodness and blessing in one's life. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"If you have paid your Zakah, then evil has left you" (Al-Hakim in Mustadarak)

On the authority of Umar Al-Khattab , the Prophet (pbuh) said:.,

"Wealth is generally lost on the land and the sea because Zakaat has not been paid on it." (Tabraani)

On the authority of Anas Bin Malik- the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"The one who does not give Zakah will be in hell on the day of Judgement" (At-Tabarani)

In another narration narrated by Ai'sha, the Prophet says:

"If Zakah or Sadaqah remain in a portion of wealth, it will destroy it" (Al-Bazzar)

This is in regards to the punishment in the Dunya and Allah says "Indeed the punishment in the hereafter is greater if only they knew" [Az-Zumar: 26]

What about the punishment in the afterlife?

It is narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari by Abu Hurairah- that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"When someone is made rich but he does not pay Zakah for his wealth, then on the Day of Judgment his money will be turned into a poisonous snake with two black spots on its head.(one of the worst kinds of snakes). It will coil around his neck and bite his cheeks and say: 'I am your wealth, I am your treasure'. Then the Prophet recited the following verse from Surah 3:180 of the Qur'an:

Let not those who are niggardly in giving for charity from what Allah has blessed them with, think that it is good for them: nay it is very bad for them. All the wealth they hoarded with niggardly behaviour will be hung around their necks like a collar on the Day of Resurrection. ""

In another Hadith it is mentioned that the prophet pbuh) said:

""For every owner of gold and silver (hoarded wealth) on which he does not pay Zakah, this wealth will be heated in the fire of Hell and made into sheets with which his flanks and forehead will be branded until Allah passes judgment among His servants on a day that measures fifty thousand years (of our reckoning), then his path will be shown, either to Heaven or to Hell." (Muslim)

O Servant of Allah, who has forgotten the rights of the poor; who has grown heedless and lazy in paying their Zakah- the punishment is known for withholding Zakah, so repent of your ways and quickly make up for this and pay your Zakah before you regret it. Remember Zakah is an

obligation on your wealth, a duty on all those who possess for a full year, the complete Nisab (the equivalent of 85 grams of Gold¹ which indicates you are liable to pay Zakah). Zakah is an act of worship and a pillar from the pillars of Islam. The annual tax we give to the taxman or the Inland Revenue is **not** a substitute for giving Zakah.

Allah Almighty says;

“The believers men and women are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity and obey Allah and His apostle.” [Tawba v104]

The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“Allah receives charity by His right hand, and then He causes it to grow for each of you. Just as you raise a horse, colt, foal, or young weaned camel, so that morsel becomes as large as the Mount of 'Uhud.” (Ahmad/Tirmidhi).

The following verse confirms this:

“Do they not know that Allah accepts repentance from His servants and accepts their charity, and surely Allah is the One Who is the Acceptor of Repentance, the Merciful?”

[Tawba v104]

¹ see for instance <http://goldprice.org/gold-price-uk.html>