

## ZAKAT

*Zakat* is the second of the five pillars obligatory categories of worship in Islam. In the holy Quran *Allah (Ta'ala)* has on numerous occasions mentioned *zakat* along with *salat*. For instance:

﴿وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ﴾ البقرة: ٤٣

(Translation of meaning) [“Establish worship and pay *zakat* [the poor-due],” (Al-Baqarah: 43)]. *Allah (Ta'ala)* has declared it as a means of purification of the body and the property. Thus He declares:

﴿خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا﴾ التوبة: ١٠٣

(Translation of meaning) [“Take alms of their wealth wherewith thou cleanse them and purify them; and pray for them. Lo! Thy prayer brings relief to them.” (At-Taubah: 103)]. *Allah (Ta'ala)* has issued a stern warning to those who do not pay this due. Thus He declared:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يُمْسِكُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ﴾

التوبة: ٣٤

(Translation of meaning) [“. . . They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings [O Muhammad] of a painful doom” (At-Taubah: 34)].

The Messenger of Allah ((*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*)) said: One who has been blessed with property but does not pay *zakat* on it will have his gold and silver transformed into a bald serpent with two black points over its eyes. Then this serpent will be placed around his neck which will catch hold of the bone beneath his ear and then will say to him: I’m your wealth; I’m your treasure (*Al-Bukhari & Muslim*).

### The Meaning of Zakat

Etymologically, *zakat* means something which purifies or increases. In the legal sense it is that specified part of one’s assets which he sets apart for spending on specified items in accordance with the conditions laid down.

## The Levy of Zakat

Payment of zakat has been made obligatory for all Muslim men and women who possess a fixed quantum of property or more. This fixed quantum is called *nisaab*. Allah (*Ta'ala*) ordains:

﴿وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ﴾ البقرة: ٤٣

(Translation of meaning) [“Establish *salat* and pay *zakat*” (Al-Muzammil: 20)]. The Messenger of Allah ((*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*)) said: I have been ordered by Allah Almighty to continue my fight against people until they testify that there is no god but Allah alone and that Muhammad is his bondman and messenger; then they establish *salat* and pay *zakat*. If they do so they will save their belonging and their blood from me unless the dues of Islam demand it and their account is with Allah. Allah (*Ta'ala*) has proclaimed:

﴿فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ﴾ التوبة: ٥

(Translation of meaning) [“Thus if they repent and establish *salat* and pay *zakat* then let them go their way” (At-Taubah: 5)].

When the Messenger of Allah ((*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*)) deputed Hazrat Ma'n (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) to Yemen as its governor he advised him thus: You are going to a nation belonging to the People of the Book. You should invite them to testify that there is no god but Allah alone and that Muhammad is his messenger. If they obey you then you tell that Allah (*Ta'ala*) has made the performance of *salat* five times in day and night obligatory for them. If they obey you then tell them Allah has made payment of *zakat* obligatory for them which will be taken from their well-off and given to their poor. If they obey you then do not take from them their best assets but collect those of the middle quality (*Al-Bukhari & Muslim*).

## The Philosophy of Zakat

Allah (*Ta'ala*) protects the property on which *zakat* has been paid, against evil intentions, evil eyes and evil designs of wicked people. The payment of *zakat* signifies the solidarity with and sympathy for the community's poor and needy members. It ensures interdependence, brotherhood and mutual love among Muslims. *Zakat* cuts at the root of men's evil tendencies of greed, avarice,

miserliness and hoarding. Payment of *Zakat* makes the rich people generous and benevolent. Payment of *zakat* encourages people to spend their money for causes beneficial to the people and to thank Allah for the bounty He has bestowed upon them.

### Consequences of Non-Payment of *Zakat*

*Zakat* is one of the pillars of the Islamic faith. Anybody who denies it becomes ipso facto a *kafir* (disbeliever). And for those who because of miserliness and the love of money do not pay *zakat*, they will deserve the wrath of Allah and deserve his punishment of the Day of Judgment.

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