The Timeline of Zakah

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Abstract

This research aimed to (1) study the rates of different types of zakah and the time of their occurrence during the history of Islam (2) identify the rates and conditions of zakah according to the time period in Islam which is divided into the era of Prophet’s companions, the era of Followers (\textit{Tabieen}), and the era of \textit{Tabi-id Tabieen} (3) study the social conditions at that time and the reasons explained by the Prophet, the rulers, and the scholars of the time. The scope of this research included the study of literature and evidences from the Qur’an, the \textit{Hadith}, and the documents related to the rates and the duration for paying different types of zakah divided by the Islamic era. Another part of this research is the study of the different viewpoints of the leading Muslim scholars concerning the conditions and reasons in stipulating the rates of zakah in different periods of time in Islamic history. This part of the research was conducted by applying qualitative methods, which used interviews as a tool in order to gain insight information for the research.

The results demonstrated that there were differences in the types and the rates of zakah in each period of Islamic history. The alternation that occurred can be observed in the time of the era of the Prophet’s companions which was different from the era of the Prophet in the types and the rates of zakah for livestock. The rate of zakah for camel and horse, which were the types of livestock that required additional payment, were changed during the era of the Prophet’s companions. The distinctive changes can be seen in the era of the \textit{Tabieen} and the \textit{Tabi-id Tabieen}. There were different viewpoints from the scholars concerning the rates, the conditions, and the regulations of zakah that were added from the era of the Prophet’s and the era of the Prophet’s companions. This has shown the clear distinction for the types and the rates of zakah in Islamic history. The research also revealed the viewpoints of the Muslim scholars concerning the additional types and rates of zakah that were added after the era of the Prophet, the era of Prophet’s companions, the era of \textit{Tabieen}, and the \textit{Tabi-id Tabieen}, for example salary zakah, expertise wage zakah, partnership zakah, and so on. The information received from this research can be used for the development of additional research in zakah, the management of zakah, and the application of zakah money for the benefit of Thai Muslim development in the future.

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1. Introduction

Islam is the way of life for all Muslim. The principles and the teachings in Islam are what every Muslim must follow in order to live a peaceful life and create harmony for their family and society. They also assist society in developing peace according to the guidelines of Islam.

There are 3 fundamental principles in Islam. The first principle is the main 6 beliefs. Muslim must believe in Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala, the Angels of Allah (Malaikah), the Books of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala, the messengers of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala (Rusulullah), the Day of Judgment (Akhirah), and the Supremacy of the Divine Will (Al-Qadâr). The second principle is the 5 acts of worship which are Al-Shahada (Declaration of Faith), Salat (Prayer), Zakah (Charity), Sawm (Fasting), and Hajj (Pilgrimage). The last principle is the primary virtue that is to perform religious activities regularly as if we see Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala always sees us. The three main principles in Islam are essential for Muslim to understand, and practice in their own daily lives.

One of the Islamic practices or acts of worship that is being discussed in this paper is the principle of paying Zakah. Paying zakah is an obligation for Muslim when possessing assets that cover a specific amount according to Islamic rule (nisab) and reach the time period of a year (hol). Since zakah can be compared as a welfare fund or a source of funds that will help other Muslim in the society for a better life, therefore, people who possess enough assets can help people who are poor or have less. People who have possessions can help others in the society by giving zakah. This is the format that is hardly observed in other religions apart from Islam. There are 8 types of people who are able to receive zakah as stated in the Quran “all charity is for the poor and those who need and those officers who collect it and those whose heart are close to the freedom of slavery and those who have debts in the way of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala, and those who are travelling. This is coming from Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala, the omniscient and has comprehensive wisdom” (Surah Attaubah: 60)

It is clearly seen that Islam emphasizes the importance of zakah, which is something that can be taken to solve the social and economic problems and reduce the inequality of people in the society which will lead to a peaceful and harmonious society. Therefore, the knowledge of zakah regarding to the rates, duration, and types is worth studying and understanding in details in order to proceed and manage accurately and meet the purpose according to the Islamic principles.

Zakah is one of the Islamic principles and an important factor in solving social problems since many problems are caused by poverty, debts, the lack of liberty in living, the lack of faith, and the lack of morality. Paying zakah will help solve these problems effectively. If the wealthy people avoid paying zakah just as they avoid paying taxes or pay less than required, or do not pay in accordance to the purpose of Islam, problems such as social gap between the rich and the poor will arise. The poor will envy the rich. Society will be weak as poverty will increase. If there is an organization that takes an administrative role in managing zakah, it will certainly be tremendously beneficial for Muslim society. Social issues will be reduced as resources are allocated and distributed at all levels of society especially the poor. Therefore, zakah is an important factor in building strong society and nation.

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala stated about zakah a lot next to the importance of praying. Zakah is the third principle of the five fundamental principles of Islam. It is important to understand as there are many philosophies beneath zakah, for example;

1) Paying zakah helps to clean the mind of the payer and is restrained from misery and selfishness.
2) Paying zakah creates the spirit of love and unity among Muslims.
3) The payers of zakah are those who pay loyalty to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala and follow the command of the Lord.
4) Paying zakah creates strong society from the mutual assistance.
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