49632 - The Difference between Zakah on Wealth and Zakat Al-Fitr

the question

Is the Zakah that is enjoined on Muslims and is one of the five pillars something other than the Zakah of Ramadan?

Summary of answer

Zakah on wealth is one of the five pillars of Islam. Whoever denies it is a disbeliever and whoever withholds it is a rebellious evildoer. Zakat Al-Fitr is not one of the pillars of Islam, and the one who denies it is not a disbeliever.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Zakah, which is one of the five pillars of Islam is something other than the Zakah that must be paid at the end of Ramadan (Zakat Al-fitr).

The former is Zakah on wealth which is only obligatory on certain kinds of wealth , namely:

- Livestock (camels, cattle and sheep)
- Gold and silver and, nowadays, paper currency
- Trade goods
- What is produced by the earth, which includes two things:

1. Crops and fruits. The scholars unanimously agreed that it is obligatory to pay Zakah on four kinds: wheat, barley, dates and raisins; they differed with regard to other kinds.
2. Rikaz (buried treasure), i.e., wealth of the disbelievers buried in the ground that is found by a Muslim.

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated in Majmu` Al-Fatawa (25/10) that Ibn Al-Mundhir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The scholars unanimously agreed that Zakah is obligatory on nine things: camels, cattle, sheep, gold, silver, wheat, barley, dates and raisins, if they reach the Nisab (minimum threshold) for each type at which Zakah becomes due. They differed with regard to other types of wealth.

Zakah for each of these kinds of wealth is obligatory subject to certain conditions, and a specific amount of the wealth must be given as defined by Shari`ah.”

This Zakah (on wealth) is one of the five pillars of Islam. Whoever denies it is a disbeliever and whoever withholds it is a rebellious evildoer; the Muslim ruler must take it from him by force. If he persists in withholding it and is protected by his tribe then he must be fought until he pays it.

Al-Bukhari (8) and Muslim (12) narrated that `Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: “Islam is founded on five (pillars): bearing witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, establishing regular prayer, paying Zakah, fasting Ramadan and going on Pilgrimage to the House.”

Al-Bukhari (25) and Muslim (22) narrated from Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “I have been commanded to fight the people until they bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and they establish regular prayer, and pay Zakah. If they do that, then they have protected their blood and wealth from me except in cases where Islamic laws apply, and their reckoning will be with Allah.”

The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) unanimously agreed on fighting those who withheld Zakah. Al-Bukhari (1400) and Muslim (20) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed away, and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) became caliph, and some of the Arabs disbelieved and apostatized, `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: `How could you

fight the people, when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “I have been commanded to fight the people until they bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. Whoever says that has protected his blood and wealth from me except in cases where Islamic laws apply, and their reckoning will be with Allah”?’ Then Abu Bakr said: `By Allah, I will fight those who differentiate between prayer and Zakah, for Zakah is what is due on wealth. By Allah, if they withhold from me a small sheep that they used to give to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), I will fight them for withholding it.’ `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: `By Allah, when I saw how confident Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was about this, I realized that this was the truth.’”

With regard to the Zakah that is obligatory at the end of Ramadan, this is Zakat Al-Fitr . The scholars unanimously agreed that it is obligatory, except those who held odd views. (See Tarh At-Tathrib, 4/46)

It is less important than the Zakah of wealth with regard to obligation and status. Zakat Al-Fitr is not one of the pillars of Islam, and the one who denies it is not a disbeliever.

Zakat Al-Fitr was mentioned in many prophetic narrations, such as the following:

- Al-Bukhari (1503) and Muslim (984) narrated that Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined Zakat Al-fitr, one Sa` of dates, or one Sa` of barley, for every Muslim, slave or free, male or female, young or old, and he enjoined that it be given before the people go out to the prayer (on `Eid).
- Abu Dawud (1609) narrated that Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined Zakat Al-fitr as a purification for those who fasted from idle or obscene talk, and so as to feed the poor. Whoever gives it before the prayer, it is accepted Zakah and whoever gives it after the prayer, it is ordinary charity. (Classed as sound by Al-Albani in Sahih Abu Dawud).

For more details, please see this category: Poor-due or obligatory charity