

EDITORIAL

Zakah is an Obligation not an Option

For some reason many Muslims take the issue of fulfilling one of their **Five Pillars** of Islam very lightly and not seriously. The yearly **Zakat** giving is not an optional deed that one can skip for a year or two, it is an obligation that one will be questioned by Allah (swt) for not “filing” and “paying” it on time.

Abu Huraira related that the Prophet 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. It will coil around his neck and bite his cheeks and say: 'I am your wealth, I am your treasure'. Then the Prophet recited verse 3:180 of the Quran. (Bukhari)

Have we ever questioned ourselves that why don't we put the same effort that we do when filing our federal and state income taxes? Why don't we read and inquire about the Zakat laws and regulations and make exact calculations of what we are supposed to give out of our wealth and properties?

The Islamic Zakat system, when correctly and wholeheartedly practiced, is capable of solving the world's poverty problems and it is able to stop the starvation that is biting with its sharp teeth millions of the less fortunate human beings. Also, it will stop the irresponsible wastage of food that many nations are practicing these days without thinking even for a second of the many families who could can benefit from that “waste”!!!

Zakah and Sadaqah: Purification and Relief

Charity – Obligated (*Zakah*) and Encouraged (*Sadaqah*) are the two magical words, when practiced, they will enlighten our lives and the lives of others.

“The alms (Zakah) are meant only for the poor and the needy and those who are in charge thereof, those whose hearts are to be reconciled; and to free those in bondage, and to help those burdened with debt, and for expenditure in the way of Allah and for the wayfarer. This is an obligation from Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.” (9:60)

They purify our money, wealth, and properties and increase them with Allah's Blessings, which if we are deprived from it, then no wealth or property, no matter how big they are, can shield us from hardships and calamities.

They purify our souls from selfishness and miserliness and it cures our hearts from the disease of “loving this life” and “preferring it over the real life in the Hereafter”.

“Have you seen him who belies the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter? He it is who drives away the orphan and does not urge giving away the food of the poor.” (107:1 - 3)

They teach us and of course our families that thanking Allah (swt) for what He has given us is not just a thought of the mind or utterance of the tongue, it has a practical part to it that should show in our love for Sharing and Caring.

“The believers, both men and women, are allies of one another. They enjoin good, forbid evil, establish Prayer, pay Zakah, and obey Allah and His Messenger.

Surely Allah will show mercy to them. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise (9:71)

They are requirements to obtain righteousness and be among the righteous believers who will be in the company of the Prophets on the Day of Judgment:

“You shall not attain righteousness until you spend out of what you love (in the way of Allah). Allah knows whatever you spend.” (3:92)

No matter what our financial conditions are, charity even if it is small is beloved by Allah (swt) and highly recommended by the Prophet (pbuh) and it is a unique mark that this Ummah possess. The prophet (pbuh) once said to his companions: *'One Dirhem could be better in reward than one hundred thousand Dirhems!'* a man asked, *'And how is that, messenger of Allah?!'* He (PBUH) replied, *'a wealthy man takes one hundred thousand Dirhems which is one part of his wealth and gives it as a charity, while a poor man who only has two Dirhems pays one of them as a charity.'*

So, it is our duty and obligation, if we are seeking Allah's blessings and pleasure, to give Zakah and share with others from the wealth and bounties that He bestowed upon us, and they are plenty. We have to search for those needy people but their dignity prevent them from begging as those mentioned in the verse:

Those needy ones who are wholly wrapped up in the cause of Allah, and who are hindered from moving about the earth in search of their livelihood especially deserve help. He who is unaware of their circumstances supposes them to be wealthy because of their dignified bearing, but you will know them by their countenance, although they do not go about begging of people with importunity. And whatever wealth you will spend on helping them, Allah will know of it. (2:273)

MUSLIM SCIENTISTS, MATHEMATICIANS AND ASTRONOMERS
Before European Renaissance, 700 - 1500 C.E.

ABU ABDULLAH AL-BATTANI (ALBATEGNIUS)

(858 - 929 C.E.)

Al-Battani, known in the West as Albategnius, was a famous astronomer and mathematician. He has been recognized as the greatest astronomer of his time and one of the greatest of the Middle Ages. Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Jabir Ibn Sinan al-Battani was born around 858 C.E. in or near Battan, a state of Harran. He belonged to the princely Sa'bi family of Harran and he was a Muslim. Al-Battani was first educated by his father Jabir Ibn Sin'an al-Battani, who was also a well-known scientist. He then moved to Raqqa, situated on the bank of the Euphrates, where he received advanced education in sciences. At the end of the ninth century, he migrated to Samarra, where he worked until his death in 929 C.E.

Al-Battani made his observations and studies in Al-Raqqah from 877 to 929 and made many important discoveries in astronomy. According to Prof. Phillip Hitti, "He made several emendations to Ptolemy and rectified the calculations for the orbits of the moon and certain planets. He proved the possibility of annular eclipses of the sun and determined with greater accuracy the obliquity of the seasons and the true and mean orbit of the ecliptic, the length of the tropical year and the seasons and the true and mean orbit of the sun." His remarkably accurate calculation of the solar year as 365 days, 5 hours, 46 minutes and 24 seconds is very close to the latest estimates. He found that the longitude of the Sun's apogee had increased by $16^{\circ} 47'$ since Ptolemy. It inferred the important discovery of the motion of solar apsides and of a slow variation in the equation of time. He did not believe in the trepidation of the equinoxes, although Copernicus, several centuries later, held that erroneous notion.

In a sharp contrast to Ptolemy, Al-Battani proved the variation of the apparent angular diameter of the sun and the possibility of annular eclipses. He revised orbits of the Moon and the planets and proposed a new and very ingenious theory to determine the conditions of visibility of the new moon. Dunthorne, in 1749, used Al-Battani's excellent observations of the lunar and solar eclipses to determine the acceleration of motion of the moon. He determined many astronomical coefficients with great accuracy: Precession of Equinoxes $54.5''$ a year and inclination of the Ecliptic $23^{\circ} 35'$. Al-Battani also provided very ingenious solutions for some problems of spherical trigonometry using the methods of orthographic projection. It was from a perusal of Al-Battani's work on apparant motion of fixed stars that Hevelius discovered the circular variation of the moon. Al-Battani's greatest fame came in Mathematics with the use of trigonometric ratios as we used them today. He was the first to replace the use of Greek chords by Sines, with a clear understanding of their superiority. He also developed the concept of Cotangent and furnished their tables in degrees.

Joseph Hell remarked that "in the domain of trigonometry the theory of Sine, Cosine and tangent is an heirloom of the Arabs. The brilliant epochs of Peurbach, of Regiomontanus, of Copernicus, cannot be recalled without reminding us of the fundamental and preparatory labor of the Arab Mathematician."

Al-Battani wrote many books on astronomy and trigonometry. His most famous book was an astronomical treatise with tables, which was translated into Latin in the twelfth century and is known by the title 'De Scientia Stellarum - De Numeris Stellarum et motibus.' The third chapter of his book on Astronomy is devoted to Trigonometry. An old translation of this book is available at the Vatican. His another book al-Zij was published by C.A. Nullino in Rome in 1899. His treatise on astronomy was extremely influential in Europe until the Renaissance and was translated in several languages.

Beer and Madler in their famous work Der Mond (1837) mention one of the surface features of the moon after Al-Battani (Albategnius). It is the name of a plain eighty miles in diameter in Section No. 1, surrounded by mountains ten to fourteen thousand feet high, several craters and several saucer-shaped pits. Al-Battani's original discoveries both in Astronomy and Trigonometry were of great consequence to the development of sciences, particularly in the Middle Ages. Copernicus in his book 'De Revolutionibus Orbium Celestium' expresses his indebtedness to Al-Battani.

Source: <http://www.cyberistan.org/> (a great and must visit web site)

Muslimah

HIC Sisters' Page
 Editor: Sr. Zakiyyah Shakoor

10 tips for teens on how to help the poor and needy

What can you, a teenager who doesn't have a lot of money or resources, do to help the poor and needy?

More than you think. Most young adults are blessed with the creativity and intelligence to find ways to help others despite limited resources. Here are some tips that can perhaps start the creative process:

1. Give a portion of your allowance each week to a poor and needy person or a cause in support of them

How much is your allowance or your salary from your part-time job? Not much, you might say. The great thing about giving though is that in about 99 percent of cases, you are not restricted to how much you can give to help the poor and needy.

That means for instance, instead of dishing out a dollar a day for a can of soda from the vending machine at school or work, maybe you can save this money two days of the week. Then give this money to the Zakah and Sadaqah committee of your mosque, a poor person you know in your neighborhood, a local soup kitchen or to a worthy cause abroad.

2. Encourage your parents to pay Zakah

Zakah is something too many Muslims neglect. If you are eligible to give Zakah, you must pay. If you aren't eligible, ask your parents about Zakah and if they pay, how and to whom. If they do not give Zakah, respectfully and politely emphasize to them the importance of this necessary pillar of Islam and encourage them to start paying it. Use wisdom and beautiful preaching.

3. Encourage a family Sadaqah (charity) project

Get the whole family to pitch in at least once a month to a worthy cause by organizing a family Sadaqah project. Call a family meeting (if you've never had one of these, this is a great time to start) and discuss your idea. Then come to an agreement on how everyone can help the poor. Whether it's contributing a set amount a week as a group with Dad giving the money to the Masjid after Friday prayers or setting up a box somewhere in the house where family members can privately donate, you all decide.

4. Talk about it in your youth group

What are the first steps in finding solutions to problems? Dua (supplication) then brainstorming and discussion.

At your next youth group meeting, put the difficulties of the poor and needy in your community on the agenda. Simply discuss and brainstorm. You don't have to come up with a plan all at once. But discussing this will start the process and keep it in people's minds. If you don't have a youth group, get your friends together. Instead of having the usual hang out time one day, substitute this with a formal meeting. Now you have a youth group that can do this exercise.

5. Visit a poor part of town

How many big cities have "poor quarters"? Almost every single one. Sometimes, we need to see the reality of poverty right in front of us to really believe it's there, especially if we live in a financially well-off part of a city.

Go with your youth group to visit these areas. You don't have to necessarily bring money or food for them (although that wouldn't be a bad idea). Talk to the people, if they are willing to be approached, about living conditions and how they ended up there. Prepare yourself for an eye-opening experience.

6. Do a class presentation on poverty

Stumped about what to do for a school assignment? Why not talk about the plight of the poor in your community. Do your research thoroughly. Get statistics on poverty, real stories from books and perhaps even video- or audiotaped interviews of the poor and homeless. Show the human face of poverty. Follow the presentation up with a class collection for the poor.

7. Don't just collect money

There are plenty of basic necessities that people have to meet. Some people can't afford new shoes. So hold a shoe drive (some teens have already done this - read this link about it). Others cannot afford clothing. Hold a clothing drive. Collect the material, arrange for cars, vans or trucks to transport it to where it's needed, then make sure the material is properly distributed.

8. Write about poverty in your school paper

Have you got a knack for writing? Then write about poverty in your school newspaper. Educate your student body not just with words, but photos too, if possible. If you've visited a poor part of the city (see tips above), then you have plenty of material and personal material to write about.

9. Write about Zakah and Sadaqah in your Masjid newsletter

Does your Masjid have a newsletter? If so, dedicate the next issue to the topic of Zakah and Sadaqah and how they help the poor and the needy. You can interview an Imam to get the basics straight. You can also include various charitable causes readers can give their money to locally to help the poor and needy.

If you don't have a Muslim youth newsletter, maybe this can be your premiere edition.

10. Collect money in your group

After your next group meeting, pass around a box to collect donations for the poor and needy. Better yet, make this a weekly practice. Make one person responsible for collecting the money and sending it off after consulting everyone on which cause it should be sent for.

<http://www.soundvision.com/>

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Friday Night Study Circles: 7:30-9:00 p.m.
 Two study circles for brothers and sisters.
Monday and Wednesday Nights' Short Reminders:
 Short reminders after Isha prayer.
Islamic Weekend School and Study Circle: 9:30-1:00
 Sunday School for children and study circle for brothers and sisters.

Prayer Times at the Masjid

Fajr: 5:15 a.m.
 Duhur: 1:00 p.m.
 Asr: 4:45 p.m.
 Maghrib: *Sunset*
 Isha: 9:00 p.m.
 Jumu'a (*Friday*): 12:30 p.m.

NOTICE to all xisting HIC voting members to renew their membership for the year 2002. Please pay your membership dues to *Br. Javed Haider* or *Br. Rashid Abbas* at your earliest convenience.

Support ...
The Islamic Academy of Huntsville (IAH) we need your donations to continue our mission of an Islamic education for our young generation
 Also you can support us by buying Kroger Gift Cards and Papa Jones' Pizza Cards from the school's Office

Did you take a look at our expansion building, recently??
 Alhamdulillah, Phase I of the HIC's Expansion Project is almost done. Your donations and generous support made it happen. Funds are needed to start Phase II, so please continue your support and donate generously hoping that with your support and donations we can have it ready by *Ramadan*, by Allah's Will.
 May Allah bless you all and bless your families...

PARADISE

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF HUNTSVILLE ISLAMIC CENTER
 1645 SPARKMAN DRIVE, HUNTSVILLE, AL 35816
 e-mail: paradise@huntsvilleislamiccenter.org

Huntsville Islamic Center
 1645 Sparkman Dr.
 Huntsville, AL 35816

Nonprofit Org.
 U.S. Postage Paid
 Huntsville, AL
 Permit # 615