

### **Is Zakat permissible for Islamic dawah organisations?**

From one of the most important matters that face every caller to Islam and every organisation, taking on the noble task of calling to this beautiful and perfect religion, is the question of sources of finance. After the terrorist incidents around the world, the ensuing drama and scrutiny over Islamic organisations struggling to do good has worsened and along with it anyone who funds Islamic projects. This has further resulted in large numbers of the general Muslim population not being as charitable as they normally are. I remember a friend of mine from a large charitable Islamic organisation telling me that the charity levels from people go down to less than half, after any major incident around the world. It seems that people become weary of being linked to anyone that may later be found to use the funds inappropriately. This paranoia and fear has gripped many people and has led to a serious lack of finances for Islamic projects everywhere. In times as difficult as these, it falls upon the Shariah to bring in ease and legislate in a manner that would allow for its rulings to mould and adapt to our time and circumstances, so that its goals and purposes can be realised in all times and circumstances.

Allah the Most High legislated Zakat as a major source of revenue for the Islamic ummah. It was legislated to cater for some of the neediest sections of the ummah. These days however, when Zakat is given, usually only the poor and miskeen are sought out despite the fact that the poor only comprise one fourth of the recipients of the Zakat described in verse 60 of Surah Tawbah – since they are only two categories out of the 8 mentioned in the verse. It was defined by Allah rigidly enough for there to be divine clarity on the recipients of Zakat, but wide enough to leave the exact definition of each of the types of recipients, upon the ijtihaad of the scholars.

At the beginning of this article it is important to mention an important argument posed by some scholars, may Allah have mercy on them all, that: Ultimately, the Zakat was not intended by the Shariah to be for every cause that is good. If this was the case, then there would be little wisdom in the Quran restricting the recipients of Zakat to the eight categories in Surah Tawbah, verse 60. Therefore, the seventh category: “Fi-sabeelillah” must not mean except a limited number of recipients that fall under the “Fi-sabeelillah” category. Imam Ibn Hazm rahimahullah says: “...And every act of good is ultimately from the path of Allah, the Most High, except that there is no difference of opinion that He did not intend every type of goodness in the division of the obligatory charity. As a result, it is not permissible for the Zakat to be given except where the verse has clearly restricted – and that is what we had mentioned before and Allah is the source of inspiration and clarity.” [AlMuhalla (6/151)] Although what the Imam mentions here “...that there is no difference amongst the scholars in this point” is not entirely accurate. However, it may be more accurate to say that Allah did not intend every act of goodness for giving Zakat to. However, what He did exactly intend, is a matter of difference amongst the scholars, may Allah have mercy on them. What exactly is the benefit of mentioning the other seven categories along with fi-sabeelillah? Is it to restrict the meaning of “fi-sabeelillah” to only a very small limited category, or was it to emphasise the importance of those other categories as the more worthy recipients of Zakat, whilst the Zakat itself being suitable for a larger category than these seven? This article will attempt to shed more light on this issue inshaAllah.

Firstly, all the scholars of Islam are of the agreement that the wording “in the path of Allah” in surah at-Tawbah, verse 60, includes physical struggle in the path of Allah. This is a matter about which there is no difference of opinion amongst the scholars of Islam. [Ahkamul-Quran of Ibnul-Arabi al-Maliki (1/396) reporting from Imam Malik, AlMughni (6/333), AlMubdi’ (2/424), Kasshaf al-Qana’ (2/283) and others]. This is based on the fact that Allah says “Fight in the path of Allah...” [2: 190], “Struggle in the path of Allah...” [5: 35], “Allah loves those who struggle in His path...” [61: 4]. However, this Ijma does not mean that this phrase is to be restricted to this meaning only, since there exists in the body of scholarly opinions - a number of important differences amongst the scholars regarding the exact boundary of the meaning of this phrase. Before I go into the main issue of difference that is the centre point of this article, below are two points of differences that the also differed on regarding adding or restricting from the meaning of “in the path of Allah” which we will allude to towards the end of this article inshaAllah:

- Some of the scholars of Islam were of the opinion that this verse only refers to the poor voluntary conscript Mujahideen and not the rich voluntary conscript Mujahideen. This is the opinion of Imam Abu Haneefah rahimahullah. As for the rest of the scholars, they were of the opinion that it refers to all voluntary conscript Mujahideen whether rich or poor, due to the hadeeth of Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam: “Verily, (obligatory) sadaqah is not permissible for any rich person except for five..” [Abu Dawud (No. 1635), Ibn Majah (No. 1841), AlMustadrak of AlHakim (1/566) and others] and amongst them the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam mentioned a mujahid. [For details of the difference, see AlMajmoo of An-Nawawi (6/211)] As for this phrase referring to “voluntary conscripts” and not to salaried army of a Muslim nation, then this is a point of general agreement amongst many of the scholars of Islam. [See Al-Insaaf (3/235), AlMajmoo (6/211) and others]
- Some of the scholars of Islam were of the opinion that the phrase “in the path of Allah” includes Muslims as well as non-Muslims struggling in the path of Allah – such as a non-Muslim who may be spying for Muslims, [Ash-Sharh al-Kabeer Hashiyyah ala ad-Dasooki (1/456)], or to those non-Muslims, if the Muslims require their defence. [Al-Umm of Ash-Shafi (2/60)]

### **Does the phrase “fi-sabeelillah” only mean those physically fighting in the cause of Allah?**

The vast majority of the earlier scholars of Islam such as Imam Abu Haneefah, Imam Malik, Imam Shafi, Imam Abu Thawr, Imam Ibn Mundhir, as well as the official position of the three madhabs, including many Hanbali scholars such as Imam Ibn Qudamah who mentioned that it was the opinion of the Hanbali madhab as well; as well as Imam Ash-Shawkani and many of the earlier scholars of Ahlul-Hadeeth, may Allah have mercy on them all, were of the opinion that “in the path of Allah” is restricted to those voluntary conscripts that were physically battling in Allah’s cause only. Some of them also mentioned the purchasing of weaponry to be included in this meaning. In our time, this was the original and first fatwa of the Kibar-ulema o] Saudi Arabia that was passed in the year 21/08/1394A.H, No. 24 by agreement of the majority with 6 scholars opposing, and from those who consented to the fatwa from the Kibar-ulema, were the majority of the permanent committee for fatwa, such as Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz and others.

Other scholars of Islam were of the opinion that in addition to the voluntary conscripts in the path of Allah, it also included those who were doing Hajj. This is the opinion of a number of the esteemed

companions of the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam such as Ibn Umar, Ibn Abbas, Abu Hurairah, Abu Saeed al-Khudri radiallahu anhum and some of the Tabiun and scholars such as Imam AlHasan AlBasri, Imam Bukhari, Imam Ahmed, Imam Ishaq bin Rahaweh and is the Hanbali madhab according to some of the scholars of the madhab, may Allah have mercy on all the ulema of Islam.

Yet others are of the third opinion that it includes many general acts of goodness, such as building mosques, defending Islam through Islamic dawah and so on and so forth. This opinion states that although those physically fighting in the cause of Allah are more worthy, nevertheless, there are others who are also struggling to uplift His religion, in other forms of struggle in the broader category of Jihad who are worthy as well. This is the opinion of some of the earlier scholars and a large number of the later scholars, such as Imam Ar-Razi [Tafsir Ar-Razi (16/113)], Imam Al-Qasimi [Mahasin a-Ta'weel (8/318)], AlAloosi [Rooh al-Ma'ani (10/123)], Imam Siddeeq Hasan Khan [Ar-Rawdahtun-Nadiyyah (1/206)], Imam As-San'ani [Subul as-Salam (2/198)], Sheikh Rashid Ridha [Tafsir al-Manar (10/585-587)], Sheikh Muhammad Shaloot [Al-Islam Aqeedah was-Sharee'ah (pg: 97-98)], Sheikh Muhammad bin Ibrahim Aalus-Sheikh the former grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia [Fatawa ash-Sheikh Muhammad bin Ibrahim (4/132)]. This is also the later and final opinion of Sheikh Abdul-Aziz bin Baz the former grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdur-Razzaq al-Afifi professor of Azhar and the former vice grand Mufti to Saudi, and others [Fatwa Lajnah ad-Da'imah (No. 12627, dated 11/2/1410A.H.), also see (No. 7746)] may Allah have mercy on all the scholars of Islam. This is also the decree of the Fiqh council of Makkah consisting of a large number of the scholars of Saudi Arabia under the chairmanship of Sheikh Ibn Baz rahimahullah in its 8<sup>th</sup> seating in the year 1405 A.H. which states: "The council agrees with total majority, that dawah to Allah and that which helps it and benefits it, is in the meaning of (in the path of Allah) as in the verse." [AlQararat (pg. 173)]

The proofs of those who hold the first opinion, that "in the path of Allah" is restricted to those voluntary conscripts that were physically battling in Allah's cause only, state that.:

1. "Fi-sabeelillah" is mentioned in the Quran more than 60 times and in the wording of the Shariah, it usually means Jihad as if the phrase is only always used for it. This is because in the Quran, "fi-sabeelillah" is only used a few times in the general sense, whilst referring to physical struggle in the path of Allah in the specific sense most of the time.
2. The hadeeth of Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam: "The [obligatory] charity is not permissible for any rich person, except for five: The fighter in the cause of Allah, or the [Zakat] collector, or the one in debt, or for a person who purchases an item given in Zakat from his own wealth, or for a person who has a neighbour that is poor to whom he gives his Zakat and then the poor neighbour gives the Zakat item as a gift to a rich man." [Reported by Abu Dawud (2/119), Ibn Majah (1/590), Sunan Al-Baihaqi alKubra (7/15), and AlMustadrak (1/566). Sheikh AlAlbani graded it as authentic due to other reports (Saheeh lighay'rihi)]. So this authentic hadeeth explains the phrase "fi-sabeelillah" and so its meaning should be restricted to it.
3. If fi-sabeelillah were to have a general meaning, then there would be no benefit in mentioning the rest of the types of recipients of the Zakat such as faqeer and miskeen, since they would all be included in the meaning of fi-sabeelillah.
4. Linguistically, it has not been reported in the Quran for there to be a phrase that is general in meaning that occurs in a listing between two phrases that denote specific meaning. Rather what has been reported is that a specific may be mentioned after a general, such as "On that night [of

Laylatul-Qadr], the angels and the Ruh descend by the command of their Lord with every decree.” [97: 4] Here, although “Ruh” meaning Jibrael alaihis salam is from the species of angels, he is mentioned after the angels showing that in a listing, a specific may be named after a general. Similarly is the case in the verse: “Whosoever is an enemy to Allah, His angels, His messengers, to Jibreel and Meekal (Mikaeel), then indeed Allah is an enemy to such disbelievers.” [2: 98] As a result, linguistically, the phrase “fi-sabeelillah” cannot have a general meaning since it occurs between “gharimeen” (those in debt) and “ibnus-Sabeel” (the wayfarer) which are both terms that have specific meaning. This argument was mentioned in a lesson that I was attending in the Prophet’s mosque delivered by Sheikh Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Mukhtar as-Shanqeeti hafidahullah in his explanation of the chapter of Zakat from Umdatul-Fiqh of Imam Ibn Qudamah rahimahumullah.

The proofs of those who hold the second opinion, that in addition to the voluntary conscripts in the path of Allah, it also included those who were doing Hajj, state that:

1. It is authentically reported from the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam that he considered an item that was specifically kept for physical fighting,] to also be suitable for Hajj, with the reasoning that both were from the path of Allah. This is from the Hadeeth of Abu Taleek radiallahu anhu who said that his wife Umm Taleek radiallahu anha asked him: “Give me your camel so that I can perform Hajj upon it.” He (Abu Taleek) replied: “Do you not remember that I have kept it safeguarded only for the path of Allah (fi-sabeelillah)?” She replied: “Verily, Hajj is from the path of Allah – so give it to me, may Allah have mercy upon you.” So Abu Taleek said: So I went to Rasulallah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam and I passed on her salam to him and I told him what Umm Taleek told me. So the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam replied: “Umm Taleek spoke the truth! If you were to give her the camel, then it would be in the path of Allah.” [Mu’jam al-Kabeer of Tabarani (22/324), Ad-Dulaabi in AlKuna wal-Asmaa (No. 249, 1/121) and AlHaithami reports this hadeeth from AlBazzar in Majma’ az-Zawaid (3/280), however I did not find it. This hadeeth was considered good by Ibn Hajr in Allsaabah and authenticated by AlAlbani. See Irwa al-Ghaleel (3/376)]
2. Similar to the above is another incident that was reported from the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam from the story of Umm Ma’qal radiallahu anha. She said: “When the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam performed the final Hajj – at that time we used to have a camel that Abu Ma’qal had kept exclusively for the purpose of using it in the path of Allah. Thereafter, we became sick and Abu Ma’qal passed away and the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam set off for Hajj. So when he came back from his Hajj, I went to him, so he asked me: O Umm Ma’qal what prevented you from going out (to Hajj)? So I replied: Abu Ma’qal wanted to (but passed away), and he has a camel that I was going to do Hajj on however Abu Ma’qal willed that it be only for the path of Allah. So he said: So why did you not come out on it? Indeed Hajj is from the path of Allah!” [Reported by Ahmed (No. 27107), Abu Dawud (No. 1979) and others. Graded Hasan by AlAlbani in Al-Irwa (3/376)]
3. Ibn Abbas radiallahu anhumaa said: He (the slave) should be freed from the Zakat of his (owners and others) wealth and given from it (Zakat) for Hajj. [Reported by AlBukhari in Ta’leeq form and connected by Ibn Abi Shaibah in his Musannaf (4/41) and declared Hasan by AlAlbani in Al-Irwa (3/377)] Similarly it has been reported by an acceptable chain from Ibn Abbas by Abu Dawud in his Sunan (No. 1990) that Ibn Abbas said: “Verily, Hajj is from the path of Allah.”

4. Ibn Umar radiallahu anhuma said when asked about using a camel for hajj that was originally kept for fighting in battle: Indeed Hajj is from the path of Allah. [Reported with a connected chain by Abu Ubaid in AlAmwal (No. 1976), Sunan Ad-Darimi (2/519) and authenticated by Ibn Hajr in Fathul-Bari (3/332)]
5. Ibn Abbas radiallahu anhuma said: We took Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam for Hajj upon a camel from the camels of (obligatory) charity. [Musnad Ahmed (4/221), AlMustadrak (1/611), Sahih Ibn Khuzaimah (4/73), Sunnan alBaihaqi alKubra (5/252) Also supporting evidence for the narration as mentioned by Ibn Hajr in Fathul-Bari (3/331) and Musannaf of Ibn Abi Shaibah (3/180). This narration has Idrabi in it, however it is most probably authentic up to Ibn Abbas. Also this narration was mentioned by AlBukhari in the introduction of this chapter in a mu'allaq form. Sheikh Shuaib Arnaut said in his checking of the hadeeth in Musnad Ahmed: Its isnad is Hasan (acceptable) See: Musnad Ahmed (4/221)]
6. There is no known difference to the opinions of the companions that they used to permit giving the Zakat for Hajj as well. It is for this reason, that some scholars use the absence of any authentic report of any difference from other companions as silent ijma on this topic. Sheikh AlAlbani rahimahullah says after mentioning the statements of Ibn Abbas and Ibn Umar radiallahu anhum on this point: "And I say: In the two Abdullaha: Meaning (Abdullah) Ibn Abbas and (Abdullah) Ibn Umar is the best and superior guidance, especially given that there is no known difference to them from the companions, as well as what has preceded mention of from the hadeeths (that support their opinion)." [Irwa al-Ghaleel of AlAlbani (3/377)]

The proofs of those who hold the third opinion, that it includes many general acts of goodness, such as building mosques, defending Islam through Islamic dawah, etc, include the proofs of the second opinion, as well as the following additional proofs:

1. In addition to Hajj, the Sunnah also mentions other matters that are from the path of Allah showing that it is not restricted to physical struggle only. From that, is the hadeeth which is elevated [Ar. Marfu'] to the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam: "Whoever leaves (his home) to seek knowledge then he is fi-sabilillah until he returns." [Tabarani (8/66)] It is also for this reason that it is reported from Abu Dhar radiallahu anhu that he said: Whoever thinks that seeking knowledge is not Jihad, then there is a deficiency in his intelligence!
2. "Fi-sabeelillah" in the majority of the verses of the Quran means Jihad, however it does not necessarily have to mean the restricted definition of Jihad only – that of physical armed struggle. Rather, Jihad has a deeper and broader meaning.
  - a. Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala says: "... And strive against them with it (the Quran), a greater struggle." [25: 52] This verse very clearly shows that dawah is also a form of Jihad.
  - b. The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam explained that it has a more comprehensive meaning, when he said: "Fight the [transgressing] Mushrikeen with your money, your bodies, and *your tongues*." [Musnad Ahmed (3/124, 153), Abu Dawud (3/10), Ad-Darimi (2/280), AlMustadrak (2/91). Shuaib Arnaut said in the checking of Musnad Ahmed: The hadeeth is authentic upon the condition of Muslim. AlAlbani graded the hadeeth as authentic in Sahih Sunan Abi Dawud]. Explaining the comprehensive meaning of Jihad, Sheikhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah says: "That is because the reality of Jihad is to expend effort in achieving that

which is beloved to Allah from acts of emaan and righteous actions, and to repel that which is disliked by Allah from disbelief, transgression and disobedience.” [Majmoo al-Fatawa (10/191-192)]

3. From one of the most important proofs that show that the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam used Zakat for that which is generally for the good of Muslims and removal of harm from them, is the incident wherein: The Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam gave 100 camels from the camels of (obligatory) charity to the family of Abdullah bin Sahal, when he was killed and no one knew who had killed him. [Reported by AlBukhari (No. 6898) and Muslim (No.1669)] AlQurtubi says about this incident: “Truly he did this on account of his noble nature, perfect governance, in order to achieve the good and ward off all harm, to quell any argument and to rein in the emotions and upon the inability to establish the truth (i.e. the punishment of manslaughter) due to lack of clarity in the matter (i.e. not knowing who the killer was).” [AlMufhim Sharh Sahih Muslim of AlQurtubi (5/15,16)] The point of witness from this hadeeth is that blood money is not one of the places where Zakat can normally be spent, unless we categorise it under the fi-sabeelillah category under the broad meaning of that phrase. Some scholars tried to deny the apparent clarity of the hadeeth of using Zakat for general good by insisting on different arguments such as perhaps the narrator of the hadeeth made a mistake, or perhaps the family of Abdullah bin Sahal were poor and so they were given the 100 camels by way of being poor or by way of being from the category of Mu'allafati quloobihim so that their hearts may be inclined towards Islam – these arguments are not based on any clear evidence and are simply based on conjecture. Imam An-Nawawi rahimahullah says: And the saying of some of them that the guardians of the dead were in need (poor), from those deserving of Zakat, then this is a futile argument since this (100 camels) is a huge amount that is not given to a singular beneficiary of Zakat as against the noblemen of a tribe and also because, he (the narrator) called it Dee'ah (blood money). And also the ta'weel of some of them that he (the Prophet sallallahu aliahi wa sallam) gave it to them from the portion of the Mua'llafati quloobihim from Zakat to soften their hearts perhaps that they may accept Islam, then this is weak! This is because it is not permissible to give the zakat to the disbeliever [Translator's comment: This is the opinion of the vast majority of the ulema] so the chosen argument is what we have mentioned from the majority, that he purchased it from the camels of (obligatory) charity [Translator: Imam Nawawi mentions this as his preferred opinion since he is upon the opinion of the Shafiyyah that Zakat is not to be given to all worthy causes].” [Sharh Sahih Muslim (11/150)] Therefore, what is clear is that this hadeeth shows that the camels of zakat were used for a matter of general good and forbidding general harm and evil. [See also Fathul-Bari (12/235)]

### **Discussion of the proofs:**

From what is clear from the list of the proofs provided by each opinion, is that:

- There is no clear definitive proof about the explanation of the phrase “fi-sabeelillah” in the verse in surah Tawbah, verse 60 that has been directly reported from the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam. Although the phrase has been used to mean physical warfare in the Quran the majority of the times, this is not proof enough that it should also only mean physical warfare in this verse as well. Also, a large number of times it has also been used in the Quran to mean the general path of guidance and acts of goodness, such as in [31:6], [4:89], [6:116], [2:262], [38:26], [22:58], [16:125], [12:108], [9:34] (Ibn Hajr mentions this verse 9:34 refers to those that do not spend

money in general acts of goodness). There are many other examples of such verses. As a result, to insist on restricting this phrase in the ayah of Zakat to only mean the fighters in Jihad – is not apparent. It is for this reason that Imam Siddeeq Hasan Khan says: “There is no clear proof to restrict the meaning of this portion to them (fighters) only, rather it is correct to give it in every cause that is in the path of Allah, glorified be He. This is the meaning of the phrase linguistically. It is obligatory to restrict oneself upon the linguistic meaning since nothing authentic (and clear) has been reported in this matter from the Shariah.” [Ar-Rawdatun-Nadiyyah (1/206)] Similarly, the hadeeth that mentions that Zakat can’t be given to the rich except 5 and that the rich mujahid is amongst them, cannot be used to restrict the meaning of the verse to fighters only. The hadeeth simply shows how the verse can refer to the Mujahideen, however this does not in any way restrict it to this meaning. Similarly, mentioning the numerous narrations, such as the narrations from the companions and tafsir of ayahs to show that fi-sabeelillah means Jihad – is of no consequence here, since the opposing views already agree that physical warfare is already included in the meaning of the verse and is from the more worthy recipient of the portion of fi-sabeelillah. The point of disagreement is whether it is only restricted to this meaning or whether it can include other acts of goodness as well.

- There are numerous ahadeeth that are authentic as mentioned by those who hold the second and third opinion – that show that fi-sabeelillah is not restricted only to fighters in the path of Allah. The authentic proofs show that Hajj, as well as blood money which were from general good and benefit for the community are also from the sources that deserve Zakat. There is also no known opposition to this understanding from the companions of the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam and had there be any opposing narration, then it would have been related to us.
- As for the argument that if “Fi-sabeelillah” were to mean all acts of goodness, then this would defy the purpose of mentioning the other recipients of Zakat in the verse, then this can be explained in the following way: That the mentioning of other recipients that can also be in the greater meaning of fi-sabeelillah is by way of increasing affirmation [Ar. Ta’keed] and not by way of division and separation [Ar.Tafreeq]. Singling out the other recipients who may also be from the general meaning of fi-sabeelillah, shows that the Zakat should not be simply put into the Baitul-Mal as from other sources of revenue, such as should be done with Kharaaj (produce of the land) and Jizyah, rather that it should specifically be used for these 8 types of recipients. Therefore, regarding fi-sabeelillah, the meaning would be that – the Zakat should be used for all those projects and matters that raise the word of Allah, defend it, protect it and sanctify it.
- It should be clear to the one that researches this topic closely, that the vast majority of the ulema of the past, simply reported the other opinions and proofs – and a large number of them did so without actively seeking to clarify which opinion is stronger than the other. [Dr Ahmed Awid Abu Shabab, Majallah alBuhooth alFihiyyah alMua’sarah (No. 68, dated 1/7/2005)] They simply reported the view of the majority and moved on from that. An example of this is what Abu Ubaid reports in his book AlAmwal, after authenticating the narration from Ibn Umar that people going for hajj can be given from Zakat: “And the ulema are not upon this, and I do not know of anyone who has given the fatwa that Zakat should be given to those going for Hajj.” [AlAmwal pg. 723] This is largely because of the fact that since physical warfare was regular and constant throughout the centuries of Islamic history, there were hardly any other causes that matched the worthiness and importance of having a capable Muslim army that was well equipped and trained. Thus, there was little need to expand the meaning of fi-sabeelillah. The reader will note

that the trend to expand the meaning of fi-sabeelillah occurred more from the scholars of the later centuries and particularly in our time given the fact that our times and situation are so different.

- It is very evident that the scholars of the past would explain the verse of the Zakat upon their prevailing situations at that time. So even though the majority generally agreed that in the path of Allah means physical warfare - they still differed on its exact limits. As has preceded, some allowed Zakat for all types of fighters, other restricted it to only voluntary conscripts; some allowed Zakat only for those far away from their lands, others allowed it for those near and far; some restricted Zakat to the poor fighters, whereas others allowed it for all; some allowed the purchase of weaponry with Zakat money, whereas others disallowed it. This shows how the scholars were applying the verse of Zakat to their situations and times as their situation dictated and called for it. This is also what is noticeable from the opinions of a large number of scholars who have chosen to apply the broader meaning of fi-sabeelillah to the verse, given that in our time, many of the types of recipients of Zakat are difficult to find or limited in different parts of the world only, and there are other similarly worthy causes that fall under the broader meaning of fi-sabeelillah that are also in need in our time today. It is for this reason that interestingly, Syed Qutb rahimahullah says: "Fi-sabeelillah is a broad terms that encompasses every good that uplifts the word of Allah for the muslim community. From the most clear proofs of this is the preparations for battle and equipping and training voluntary conscripts and the sending of missionaries for calling to Islam and to clarify and spread its teachings to all people. Also to setup schools and universities that will teach and raise a generation upon the correct fundamentals, so that we do not leave them to the public schools that teach them everything but Islam, nor to the schools of the Christian missionaries who exploit their childhood and innocence with false teachings about religion – that which they are not able to defend against." [Fi Dhilaal al-Quran (10/82)] It is also equally interesting to note that the companions of the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam – permitted giving the wealth kept for fi-sabeelillah – for hajj, when the times and situation had changed in one of the years – in which there were no wars going on in the Muslim empire, such as the incident reported by the student of Ibn Umar – Nafi rahimahullah who said that a man came to Ibn Umar and said: Verily a man (who passed away) gifted a camel to me in his will, to use in the path of Allah only, and this is not the time when there are any battles going on. Can I use the camel for doing Hajj? So Ibn Umar replied: "Hajj and umrah are both fi-sabeelillah!" [Ad-Darimi (2/519) and authenticated in AlFath (3/332)]

### **The preferred opinion:**

From what has preceded mention, the broader meaning of fi-sabeelillah is the preferred opinion and Allah the most High knows best. In times like we are in today, it is imperative that the scholars, may Allah have mercy on them all, give their fatwas in a manner that caters for the needs of our society to defend against the intellectual onslaught against our values and way of life and aid us in fulfilling our obligation to show case to the world the beauty of our religion. This cannot be done except by appropriate funding for dawah and community development organisations, Islamic radio and media, Islamic institutes and universities, funding students of knowledge and supporting teachers of goodness – and any project or worthy cause that is directly involved in working in the broader meaning of the path of Allah. Such was the guidance of the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam when



he gave the blood money of Abdullah bin Sahal from the Zakat – that ultimately the Zakat is meant for the attainment of benefit and prevention of harm from the Muslim ummah.

And Allah knows best.

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