

Comparative Study of Zakat and Dana in the Qur'an and Tripitaka: An Offer of Interfaith Dialogue

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Abstract

Diversity in religion is inevitable. Zakat and Dana are concepts of giving in Islam and Buddhism that show diversity in religious approaches to the value of giving. This paper starts with three important questions: a) How are the concepts of zakat and dana in the Qur'an and Tripitaka? b) What are the similarities and differences between zakat and dana in the Qur'an and Tripitaka? c) How does the comparison of Zakat and Dana in the two books realize interfaith dialogue? The findings in this article show that both the Qur'an and Tripitaka provide guidance related to the concept of giving as a universal value. Both teach the importance of sharing as a form of goodness that supports the welfare of individuals and society. The differences between zakat and dana lie in their nature, implementation, and religious dimensions that can complement each other. This study shows that zakat and dana can be platforms for dialogue between religious communities. The diversity in these two religious traditions can strengthen tolerance and harmony.

Keywords Zakat, Dana, Interfaith dialogue

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social, and moral relationships in the lives of individuals and society. Zakat in Islam and dana in Buddhism both emphasize the importance of giving as an ethical and spiritual act. Zakat is an obligation for Muslims to purify wealth, help others, and realize social justice. Meanwhile, dana are a universal teaching in Buddhism to let go of attachment to material things and help others. Although there are similarities in both values, they also differ. The diversity in both religions has the potential for interfaith dialogue as an effort to understand each other and how both religions can provide guidance in addressing issues of poverty, social inequality, and human solidarity.

Introduction

The concept of giving is one of the foundations of values in various religious traditions, including Islam and Buddhism. The Qur'an and Tripitaka as holy books believed by Muslims and Buddhists have provided several teachings related to the importance of giving to form spiritual,

Previous studies related to zakat and dana are still minimal. Researchers only found research conducted by Ainul Fazerina Siregar and friends related to *the Concept of Alms in Islam and Dana in Buddhism*. (Fazerina Siregar et al., 2022) This study raises a comparison of objects between zakat and dana, but has not touched deeply on how the two concepts are in the Qur'an and Tripitaka. Meanwhile, two studies compare the Qur'an and Tripitaka. First, the study conducted by Ahmad Zakiy on the messages of peace in the Qur'an and Tripitaka. (Zakiy, 2024) Second, the study conducted by Eko Saputra et al. raised the topic of Religious Moderation. (Saputra & Noor, 2024) Meanwhile, research related to zakat and dana and the offer of interfaith dialogue has still escaped the attention of academics.

This paper aims to complement the shortcomings of the literature mentioned above. Namely, regarding zakat and dana in the Qur'an and Tripitaka into one study of this paper. At least, three questions can be asked: a) How is the concept of zakat and dana in the Qur'an and Tripitaka? b) What are the similarities and differences between zakat and dana in the Qur'an and Tripitaka? c) How does the comparison of zakat and dana in the two books realize interfaith dialogue? These three questions will be an important starting point in the discussion of this article.

This paper is based on the argument that both religions and holy books teach social concern in the form of giving. Both the Qur'an and the Tripitaka provide guidance regarding the concept of giving as a universal value that transcends religious, cultural, and belief boundaries. Although

there are differences in the purpose of the concept of giving, both give the impression of supporting human solidarity.

Research methods

The method applied in this study uses descriptive-analytical to find the theoretical basis related to the concept of giving in the Qur'an and Tripitaka. The descriptive-analytical method attempts to describe the object of research through the literature data that has been collected and then compare it. This research is a library research, the primary sources in this study are the Qur'an and Tripitaka, while the secondary sources are articles and other studies related to the theme raised. By raising two perspectives, namely between Islam and Buddhism, this research is included in comparative research. This method is used to try to see the aspects of differences and similarities of two or more research objects so that it will be possible to find common ground between the two religions.

Results and Discussion

A. Definition of Zakat and Dana in the Qur'an and Tripitaka

The word **الزكاة** repeated 32 times in the Qur'an in 19 surahs ('Abd al-Baqi, 1945). As for the language, zakat comes from Arabic which means holy, growing, blessing, and praiseworthy. (Mandzur, 1119) While zakat in terms, although scholars put it forward with different wordings from one another, in principle it is the same, namely zakat is the granting of ownership rights over a certain portion of the property to certain people who have been determined by sharia, solely because

of Allah. (Al-Zuhaili, 2011) In the Qur'an, the command to pay zakat is found in several verses, one of which is in QS. al-Baqarah/2: 110

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا
لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

Dirikanlah salat dan tunaikanlah zakat. Segala kebaikan yang kamu kerjakan untuk dirimu akan kamu dapatkan (pahalanya) di sisi Allah. Sesungguhnya Allah Maha Melihat apa yang kamu kerjakan. (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019)

In the Tripitaka, a concept called Dana is known. Dana comes from Sanskrit and Pali which means virtue and generosity, charity or giving alms. Dana is also called the beginning of liberation. In the Tripitaka, it is mentioned that the Buddha, when preaching to new people, began to explain in depth about the nobility of giving (danakatha, Vin.I.15,18). Giving is the first element of the three bases for doing meritorious deeds (puññaki-nyavatthu). The other two bases are *sila*/ morality and mental development (A.IV.241). In addition, of the ten *paramitas* that must be perfected to achieve Buddhahood, Perdana is the first. (Alberd Alberto Ardiansyah & Surya, 2023)

In general, giving is giving up some of one's possessions or money to be given to those in need. Buddhism understands that the good deed of giving is the most basic act of merit or virtue, which serves as a foundation for the development of higher virtues, such as *sila* (moral living), *samadhi* (having concentration), and *Pañña* (having wisdom), until finally achieving the freedom of *Nibbana* (true freedom).

(Sukarti, n.d.) Giving is an act of practicing letting go of one's attachment to goods or objects owned based on the awareness of the existence of *anicca* (impermanence). (Sukarti, n.d.)

In the Tripitaka, the Buddha gave teachings on the importance of giving. Among them:

“Bhikkhus, if people knew, as I know, the result of giving and sharing, they would not eat without first giving, nor would they let the stain of stinginess take hold of them and take root in their minds. Even if it were their last morsel, their last mouthful, they would not eat without first sharing, if there were someone to share it with. But, bhikkhus, as people do not know, as I know, the result of giving and sharing, they eat without first giving, and the stain of stinginess takes hold of them and takes root in their minds.” (It 26:18-19) (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012)

From this saying, it is implied that giving is a recommended practice, not an obligation. However, its position as the first teaching in meritorious actions and *paramitas* shows the urgency of the results and benefits of giving.

Based on the definition of Zakat and Dana above, it is found that there is a similarity that both are understood as a good deed by giving wealth which is then given to those in need. In Islam, Zakat is the fourth pillar of Islam. In Buddhism, giving is always in first place in every element of teaching.

B. Wisdom and Benefits of Zakat and Dana

The relationship between the understanding of zakat according to language and terms is that the wealth that is

paid for zakat will be blessed, grow, develop, and increase, pure, and will increase goodness. (BAZNAS, 2018) Zakat can purify the sins of the person who pays it, and increase his reward, and his wealth. (Al-Zuhaili, 2011)

(QS. al-Taubah/9: 103)

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Take zakat from their wealth (to) purify and cleanse them, and pray for them because indeed your prayer is peace for them. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019)

Zakat is part of the pillars of Islam. Zakat is referred to as *maaliyah ijtima'iyah worship* (worship of wealth that has a social dimension), and has a strategic and determining position, both seen from the perspective of Islamic teachings and from the perspective of developing the welfare of the community. There are many great and noble wisdom and benefits in zakat worship, both related to the person who pays zakat (muzaki), the recipient (mustahik), the wealth on which zakat is paid, and society as a whole. There are at least 10 types of wisdom and benefits of paying zakat:

- a. As an embodiment of faith in Allah SWT, being grateful for His blessings, cultivating noble morals, cleaning and developing the assets one owns (QS. al-Taubah/9:103, QS. al-Rum/30:39)
- b. Functions to help, assist, and develop the mustahik, to prevent them from being spared from the punishment of Allah SWT. because

of the failure to pay zakat (QS. al-Nisa/4:37)

- c. As a pillar of shared charity (QS. al-Baqarah/2:273)
- d. The concrete form of social security prescribed by Islam, the embodiment of Allah SWT's command to help each other (QS. al-Ma'idah/5:2)
- e. Source of dana for the development of facilities and infrastructure
- f. Cleansing dirty property, taking out part of other people's rights from property properly and correctly (QS. al-Baqarah/2:267)
- g. Income equalization instrument, preventing the accumulation of wealth on one hand (QS. al-Hasyr/59:7)
- h. Encourage people to work to have wealth to fulfill their living needs, and also compete to become zaki (QS. al-Mu'minun/23:1-4)
- i. Purify the heart from stinginess and stinginess
- j. The realization of the basics of social solidarity between the poor and the rich. (BAZNAS, 2018)

In the *Dhammapada*, in section 17 Kodhavaggo/Citizens on anger 223/176 it is also explained regarding the act of giving which can eliminate stinginess.

anger ; conquer unkindness with kindness; conquer stinginess with charity; conquer false speech with truth. (Mahathera, 2018)

In the Buddhist approach to purifying the mind, giving has an important role in fighting *lobha* (stinginess). In Buddhism, there are three unwholesome roots of motivation, one of which is greed.

It is explained that by giving, greed and egoism can be eliminated. Giving is also a moral act to help others and has been a social tradition since the time of the Buddha. In addition, there are several other benefits of giving: a. The donor will be liked and loved by many people (bonding friendship); b. Good and wise people follow him; c. His name is Fragrant; d. In any social environment full of self-confidence and will not experience difficulties' e. After death, he will be reborn in heaven.(Sukarti, n.d.)

Giving alms or charity is done/given in eight ways, as stated by the Buddha in *Anguttara Nikaya* , VIII.31 as follows:

One gives spontaneously; or one gives out of fear; or thinking, “he has also given me a gift”; or thinking, “he will give me a gift too”; or thinking that giving is good; or thinking, “I cook, but they (as ascetics) do not”; because of cooking, it would be improper for me not to give food to those who do not cook”; or thinking, “by making offerings, my name will be fragrant”; or one gives because it ennobles and beautifies the mind.

These eight ways are the ways that are done when someone gives alms. Alms can be done spontaneously, for example when seeing a child begging on the side of the road, or when seeing a hermit doing *alms*. However, alms are not done because of fear, not to repay other people's actions, but alms are done because of the will of the self to let go of the ego within oneself. (Sukarti, n.d.) Thus, it can be concluded that alms also have the function of letting go of arrogance from oneself.

In the Qur'an Tripitaka, the wisdom of zakat and dana is very continuous. There is an effort to cleanse oneself from

despicable traits such as stinginess and arrogance as well as an effort to help each other in it.

C. Eight people received zakat and dana

In the Qur'an, it has been explained to whom zakat should be given. Zakat is collected by zakat management institutions. Zakat received by the managers is distributed to the *mustahik* according to the priority scale that has been arranged in the work program. Those who are entitled to receive zakat have been described in QS al-Taubah/9:60.

﴿إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ
 وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي
 الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ
 فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

Sesungguhnya zakat itu hanyalah untuk orang-orang fakir, orang-orang miskin, para amil zakat, orang-orang yang dilunakkan hatinya (mualaf), untuk (memerdekakan) para hamba sahaya, untuk (membebaskan) orang-orang yang berutang, untuk jalan Allah dan untuk orang-orang yang sedang dalam perjalanan (yang memerlukan pertolongan), sebagai kewajiban dari Allah. Allah Maha Mengetahui lagi Mahabijaksana.(Kementerian Agama RI, 2019)

Eight entitled groups receive zakat;

- Poor*; has various definitions, one of which is according to Imam al-Thabari is a person who is in need, but can guard themselves from begging,
- Poor*; people who are not capable of fulfilling their needs and their family in a way reasonable although

they have jobs and income.(BAZNAS, 2018)

- c. *Amil Zakat*; is someone on duty To take and collect zakat.
- d. *Converts to Islam*; people who in the early days of Islam appeared to Islam they , because their belief towards Islam was still weak , they given zakat to strengthen their belief towards Islam.
- e. *Riqab* ; the majority of scholars call it *mukaatab* , namely Muslims who don't own treasure For pay off payment to be made they give to the rule is to be independent, though he strong and capable Work .
- f. *Gharimin* ; people who bear and are in debt, as well No own treasure For pay it off .
- g. *Fii Sabilillah* ; most scholars believe they are the mujahids who fight and those who don't get payment from the government. Definition *fii Sabilillah* This is diverse in the book of interpretation, which is also deep context Now the meaning will be different Again.
- h. *Ibn Sabil*; travelers who run out of supplies When in the journey or when you want to do journey For obedience, not For disobedience and him No capable reach the purpose except with help.(Al-Zuhaili, 2016)

Definition Eight existing groups in QS. al- Taubah /9:60 This own dynamic meaning Because of development of the times. It means that meaning paragraph This was revealed to the Prophet SAW. and the present Can So different Because influence development of the times so that will always needed contextualization.

Uniquely is that in the Tripitaka (AN 8:59; IV 292) it is also found eight people who deserve to receive dana

“Bhikkhus, these eight beings are worthy of alms, worthy of acceptance, worthy of offerings, worthy of veneration, fields of matchless merit for the world. What are these eight beings?”

“Stream-Enterers, beings who practice attaining the fruition of Stream-Entry; Once-Returners, beings who practice attaining the fruition of Once-Returners; Non-Returners, beings who practice attaining the fruition of Non-Returners; *Arahants*, beings who practice to attain the fruition of *Arahats*.”

“Bhikkhus, these eight beings are worthy of alms, worthy of acceptance, worthy of offerings, worthy of veneration, fields of matchless merit for the world.”

From the Buddha's words, the definition of the eight people in question is the Bhikkhus. In the Tripitaka, especially in *the Sutta Pitaka*, it is often told that the Buddha and the Bhikkhus received much respect from kings and rich merchants, but the Bhikkhus and Buddha actually visited the poor to receive food offerings " *pindapata* " from them. It is explained that the reason they received the dana was to teach the underprivileged to practice giving and be willing to donate, the Buddha guided them to change their fate.

In another explanation, it is also mentioned that nobles and holy people are the recipients who are considered the most suitable. For example, it is given to a monk to achieve holiness or to a Buddhist mediator who lives by carrying out the five precepts. (Fazerina Siregar et al., 2022)But

then, the giving of dana is not only limited to monks/sangha but also to anyone who needs it.

D. Types of Zakat and Dana

In Islam, zakat is generally divided into two types, namely zakat fitrah and zakat maal. Zakat Fitrah is zakat which is obligatory because of *futur* (breaking the fast) in the month of Ramadan. Zakat fitrah functions to purify those who are fasting from dirty words and deeds, to feed and provide for those who are not sufficient from their needs, and to beg on Eid al-Fitr. This zakat must be paid by every free Muslim who has staple food in excess of his own and his family's needs for a day and night.

As for zakat maal also called zakat on wealth in this case in the form of gold, silver, and money, it must be paid after fulfilling certain requirements stated in QS al-Taubah/9: 34-35. The main requirements for this zakat are reaching the nisab, passing one year (haul), perfect ownership rights, more than basic needs, and being free from debt that causes it to be less than the nisab.(BAZNAS, 2018)

Meanwhile, in the teachings of Buddhism there are several types of dana; *Amisa dana*, giving physical objects, and resources such as food, clothing, and other possessions are donated to meet the physical needs of others while developing a sense of compassion and care; *Paricaya dana*, giving trust, giving full responsibility and trust to fellow practitioners in a spiritual context; *Abhaya dana*, giving physical and emotional protection, providing a sense of security and protecting others from harm or fear, individuals

contribute to the creation of a safe and supportive environment; *Dhamma dana*, giving teachings, wise advice as a form of contribution to help others understand the principles of wisdom and achieve liberation, sharing teachings contributes to mutual spiritual growth and the achievement of deep understanding of the Dhamma.

The time for giving is not specifically determined, but on the Kathina holiday, there is a ceremony of offering robes to the Sangha after undergoing Vassa. In addition to the Kathina robes, Buddhists also donate necessities for monks, monastery equipment, and donate for the development and advancement of Buddhism.(Imron, 2023)

Zakat is managed by a government-formed Badan Amil Zakat Nasional. (BAZNAS, 2018) Meanwhile, the Dana in Buddhism is managed directly by the temple administrator, and people usually donate to the sangha at their temple. However, on November 12, 2024, the Directorate General of Buddhist Community Guidance discussed the draft Regulation of the Minister of Religion regarding the Management of Paramita Dana with the aim that these religious dana are managed systematically, transparently, and beneficial for the welfare of the community. In the author's opinion, this is a possible indication of the existence of an institution/system that regulates Buddhist dana.

E. Comparison between the Qur'an and the Tripitaka

Aspect	Zakat (Quran)	Charity/donation (Tripitaka)
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Characteristic	It is obligatory for Muslims whose wealth reaches the nisab	Suggestion/voluntary without obligation or specific rules
Recipient	Fakir, Poor, Amil zakat, convert, gharimin, riqab, fii sabilillah, ibn sabil	Stream-Enterers, beings who practice attaining the fruition of Stream-Entry; Once-Returners, beings who practice attaining the fruition of Once-Returners; Non-Returners, beings who practice attaining the fruition of Non-Returners; <i>Arahants</i> , beings who practice attaining the fruition of <i>Arahatta</i> , and anyone who needs
Objective	Manifestation of faith in	Purification of the mind from greed and

	Allah SWT, purification of assets	reducing attachment to material things
Type	Zakat Fitrah and Zakat Maal	Amisa Dana, Paricaya Dana, Abhaya Dana, Dhamma Dana
Implementation	At certain time, zakat fitrah in the month of Ramadan	There is no specific time, but there is a procession of offerings on the Kathina day.
Management	Organized through individuals or zakat institutions such as BAZNAS	Done privately or through a community

In the comparison above, we see that there is diversity in the scriptures about the concept of giving. This diversity is unavoidable and to deal with it, the concepts in both scriptures must be explained and tried to be understood. This diversity can be an idea for exchanging information, and one of them is through interfaith dialogue.

F. Offer of Interfaith Dialogue

From the discussion above, it is interesting to find many similarities in the ideas of both scriptures about the concept of giving. Muslims and Buddhists are both

encouraged to give wealth/material things to those in need. Together, both can also recall the emphasis of the Qur'an and the Tripitaka on the goal of purification, both of wealth and mind.

Quoted from Jon Armajani, Sallie B. King, a Professor Emerita of Religious Studies at James Madison University in Virginia, United States explains in her chapter on interfaith dialogue in the book *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Diversity*, seven types of interfaith dialogue. The first is an official or institutional dialogue between elites who are chosen as official representatives by their respective religions. Second, parliamentary-style dialogue where religious leaders speak in an open forum to make their views widely known. Third, is verbal dialogue, the purpose of this dialogue is to achieve a better understanding of other religions through a focus on the doctrine, philosophy, theology, or worldview of a religion. Fourth, is intervisitative dialogue, which is where a religious community visits members of another religious community. Fifth, is spiritual dialogue, where someone learns and engages in the spiritual practices of another religion. Sixth, is practical dialogue, the purpose of which is to work on a concrete project in society or in the world. Seventh, internal dialogue, where someone can have informal or formal conversations with members of two different religions.(Armajani, 2017)

In the author's opinion, the most appropriate type of dialogue for this discussion on zakat and dana is a verbal dialogue between Muslims and Buddhists, given that this paper examines some

similarities and differences regarding key themes in both religions. The discussions in this paper can be adapted to several other forms of dialogue. The outcome of this dialogue between Muslims and Buddhists will depend on the context in which the dialogue takes place and the particular Muslims and Buddhists who may be involved in the dialogue. At the same time, Muslims and Buddhists involved in this dialogue can use the ideas from the dialogue to understand each other's teachings. They may even be able to work together to address global issues such as poverty and social inequality.

Conclusion

Both the Qur'an and the Tripitaka provide guidance on the concept of giving as a universal value. Both teach the importance of sharing as a form of goodness that supports the welfare of individuals and society. The differences between zakat and dana lie in their nature, implementation, and religious dimensions that can complement each other. This study shows that zakat and dana can be platforms for interfaith dialogue. The diversity in these two religious traditions can strengthen tolerance and harmony. In practice, the spirit of zakat and dana can be collaborated in interfaith social and humanitarian programs.

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