

Rinterpreting Qur'anic Verses on Zakat Recipients: A Gadamerian Hermeneutical Analysis of Muhammad Shahrur's Perspective

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Abstract

According to Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics, human understanding is constantly molded by historical influences. Similarly, Muhammad Shahrur, a modern Syrian intellectual, reinterprets Islamic teachings by considering the historical context in the interpretation of religious texts. Thus, this article adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, utilizing the literature on Gadamerian hermeneutics, to examine Shahrur's ideas regarding the categorization of zakat recipients based on his interpretation of verse 60 of Surah At-Tawbah. The findings indicate that Shahrur challenges traditional Islamic jurists' perspectives on zakat recipients and identifies four categories of deserving individuals: the poor, the destitute, the indebted, and the wayfarers or travelers in need. Through a scientific-historical approach, he expands the definition of 'poor' to include orphans, broadens the category of 'destitute' to encompass individuals with special needs, incorporates those obligated to pay blood money for wrongful killings under the 'indebted' category, and refers to those who suffer losses during their travels as 'wayfarers'. Shahrur's interpretation is influenced by his scientific-historical approach, which is significantly shaped by the prevailing intellectual framework of Moscow, particularly Russian structuralism. Additionally, his linguistic professor, Jafar Dak al-Bab, also impacted his intellectual development.

Keywords: Muhammad Shahrur; recipients of Zakat; Syria; Gadamerian Hermeneutical; Russian structuralism.

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