
Development and Contextualization of the Meaning of Sabîlillâh: A Study of Reality and Conditions in Indonesia

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to understand and analyze the development and contextualization of the meaning of sabîlillâh: a study of reality and conditions in Indonesia. This research is included in the category of qualitative research that adopts a descriptive analysis approach and content analysis with a Philological / Semantic and Phenomenological approach. Data is obtained from various primary sources such as books, books, journals, and others and supporting secondary data sources. In this method, researchers attempt to illustrate existing phenomena by analyzing and presenting data or facts systematically, thus facilitating the understanding and process of concluding. The results showed that MUI tried to expand the meaning of ashnâf fî sabîlillâh through various zakat fatwas to answer the challenges and problems of the ummah today. MUI provides wider space in using zakat funds for public benefit and various benefits, such as legal case defence, scholarship assistance, amil zakat salaries, zakat foundation or institution operations, disaster management, clean water supply, and response to the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters. MUI's efforts in expanding the meaning of ashnâf fî sabîlillâh are by the concept of maqâshid as-syarî'ah, especially in safeguarding religion, life, reason, offspring, and property, both dharûriyyât, hâjiyyât, and tahsîniyyât. This is a relevant step in facing the growing social and economic challenges in society.*

Keywords: *development, contextualization, the meaning of sabîlillâh, reality and conditions, Indonesia.*

INTRODUCTION

Zakat is worship that has two dimensions, namely spiritual and social [1]. Zakat is also a major element in the concept of philanthropy in Islam to provide relevant and sustainable solutions to growing problems in Society [2]. In addition to being part of the third pillar of Islam, the implementation of zakat has a positive impact such as forming good character on those who give zakat and those who receive zakat [3].

Zakat has a broader role than just helping to improve the economic conditions of the mustahik. The integration of zakat in the modern context is expected to support the economic independence of the Ummah, given that the concept of zakat has been the basis for economic development since the early days of the apostolate. The main purpose of zakat is to change the condition of a person who previously received assistance (mustahik) into a zakat giver (muzakki). In addition, zakat has great potential in overcoming the problems of economic inequality and poverty in a country [4], [5].

Zakat has many benefits for both mustahik and muzakki; individuals and communities as protection as well as recovery [6], [7]. Not a few of the verses of the Qur'an explain the obligation to pay zakat side by side with the obligation to pray. Where prayer is one of Allah's rights from His servants and zakat is a right between others [8], [9].

Differences of views on the issue of zakat are natural, as are debates about other religious obligations. As Muslims, we appreciate that the difference of views on this issue is part of the rich scholarly tradition of classical and contemporary scholars [10].

The discourse on zakat recipients (*ashnâf tsamâniyah*) becomes interesting to study, especially when it is related to the reality of poverty in Indonesia so it is always interesting to study to find solutions [11], [12]. One important concept in zakat jurisprudence is "*ashnâf fî sabîlillâh*" which refers to the category of zakat recipients who are entitled to receive assistance from zakat funds because they are involved in *da'wah* activities and religious development [13], [14].

Fî sabîlillâh has a more global scope and it is not yet clear who and what it refers to. This is in contrast to the other seven types of zakat recipients [15]. As an institution that has an authoritative role in the implementation of Islamic teachings in Indonesia, MUI has an important responsibility in interpreting the meaning and formulating guidelines related to this concept. However, in the process, MUI is also faced with the demand to maintain the relevance of Islamic teachings to the challenges of the growing times to support their activities in the fields of religion, education, and social activities related to *da'wah* [16].

One approach to understanding concepts in Islam, including *ashnâf fî sabîlillâh* is through the framework of *Maqâshid as-syarî'ah* or the goals of sharia [17]. *Maqâshid as-syarî'ah* emphasizes the achievement of broader goals, such as justice, welfare, and the protection of human rights [18], [19]. Therefore, research on the expansion of the meaning of *ashnâf fî sabîlillâh* from the perspective of MUI, viewed from the point of view of *maqâshid as-syarî'ah*, is an important step to keep the implementation of this concept consistent with fundamental Islamic values to answer the social, economic, and cultural challenges faced by Indonesian society [20], [21].

Based on these problems, the author is interested in developing it into a study entitled "Expansion of the Meaning of *Ashnâf Fî Sabîlillâh* Perspective of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Reviewed from *Maqâshid as-Syarî'ah*."

LITERATURE REVIEW

Below are several literature review searches on the theme "Development and Contextualization of the Meaning of *Sabîlillâh*: A Study of Reality and Conditions in Indonesia". The data is in the form of a table as follows

Table 1. Literature review on the theme "Development and Contextualization of the Meaning of *Sabîlillâh*"

Authors	Article Title	Journal/Conference	Findings
Abdullah, M. I.	Makna dan Implikasi <i>Sabîlillâh</i> dalam Konteks Sosial Indonesia	Jurnal Islam Nusantara	This research highlights the significance of <i>Sabîlillâh</i> in Indonesian society, emphasizing the importance of proper understanding and effective implementation in diverse social contexts
Fitriana, A., & Rizki, B.	Pengembangan Pemahaman <i>Sabîlillâh</i> di Perguruan Tinggi Islam	Konferensi Internasional Pendidikan Islam	This article examines efforts to develop an understanding of <i>Sabîlillâh</i> in Islamic universities in Indonesia, highlighting the key role of educational institutions in

			strengthening understanding and practices that are appropriate to the Indonesian social context.
Rahman, A.	Sabilillâh sebagai Konsep Kehidupan dalam Perspektif Sufisme	Jurnal Tasawuf Modern	This research explores the mystical and spiritual dimensions of the concept of Sabilillâh, showing how this understanding can influence the daily life practices of Muslim individuals in Indonesia.
Widodo, B.	Penerapan Konsep Sabilillâh dalam Pembangunan Infrastruktur di Indonesia	Konferensi Infrastruktur Nasional	This article explores how the concept of Sabilillâh can be applied in the context of infrastructure development in Indonesia, highlighting the importance of Islamic values in an inclusive and sustainable development process.
Susanto, D., & Sari, F.	Implementasi Nilai Sabilillâh dalam Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Pedesaan	Jurnal Pengembangan Masyarakat	This research describes concrete efforts to empower rural communities through the implementation of Sabilillâh values, showing its positive impact on the welfare and sustainability of the local economy.

The table above provides a brief overview of various studies related to the development and contextualization of the meaning of Sabilillâh in Indonesia, including the source, year of publication, and the main findings of each study.

METHODOLOGY

This research is included in the qualitative research category which adopts a descriptive analysis and content analysis approach [22]. In this method, researchers attempt to illustrate existing phenomena by analyzing and presenting data or facts systematically, thus facilitating the understanding and process of concluding.

Qualitative research involves the publication of descriptive data in the form of words recorded or conveyed orally by individuals as well as behaviours that have been observed [23]. This type of research is library research. Library research is literature research, which indicates that the data sources used come from written literature such as books, scientific papers, articles, theses, dissertations, and other materials related to the object of research [24].

The selection of this research method is adjusted to the main purpose of the study, which is to comprehensively describe, understand, and uncover information and conduct an analysis of aspects relevant to the Expansion of the Meaning of Ashnâf fî sabilillâh Perspective of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Reviewed from Maqâshid as-syar'ah.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Qur'an (as a text) is an object that is always interesting to study. Because, the Qur'an is a holy book that is still authentic, both in terms of language and meaning [25]. Allah Almighty chose Arabic as the language of the Qur'an and the language of man (qur'ânan 'Arabian) so that people more easily understand and implement the teachings contained therein. However, to fully understand the meaning and substance contained in the verses of the Qur'an is not simple for Muslims. A viable approach is needed: through tarjamah, ta'wil, and tafsir [26], [27].

The expansion of the meaning of a single word is closely related to the science of semantics. The term "semantics" comes from the English "semantics," which refers to the Greek "sema" meaning "sign" or "symbol," or it may also come from the Greek verb "semaino" meaning "to show" or "to describe" [28], [29]. Linguists use the term to refer to the discipline of linguistics that examines aspects of meaning. In the study of Arabic, aspects of science related to meaning are often referred to as "the science of al-dilālah." However, some linguists also refer to it as "the science of al-ma'na" [30].

The expansion of the meaning of a word is closely related to semantics, which is a branch of science that focuses on the analysis of meaning in language. This discipline is related to connections between meanings, as found in synonyms, antonyms, as well as hyponyms. The semantics of the Qur'an became an interesting theory and study among Muslims and even non-Muslims. Many of these words have been around for hundreds to thousands of years, but the meanings of these words are undergoing dynamic changes. The impact of the above has also resulted in differences of opinion among commentators and jurisprudence scholars in interpreting the term "fi sabīlillāh" as a recipient of zakat [31].

MUI has an important responsibility in interpreting the meaning and formulating guidelines related to this concept. One approach to understanding concepts in Islam, including *ashnāf fi sabīlillāh* is through the framework of *maqāshid as-syarī'ah* or the purposes of sharia. As an organization that has a key role in managing and directing religious affairs in Indonesia, the MUI has broad authority in issuing fatwas and views of Islamic law. This authority is granted by the regulations contained in Law Number 7 of 1989 concerning Religious Courts. The MUI has the authority to issue fatwas in various aspects, including worship, muamalah transactions, family matters, Islamic law, and various other religious matters. With this regulation, fatwas issued by the MUI have binding legal force for Muslims in Indonesia [32], [33].

Fatwa in the context of the MUI Fatwa Commission is an opinion or explanation of legal aspects or Islamic teachings related to questions or problems raised by the community [34]. This fatwa aims to guide the implementation of Islamic religious teachings [35]. There are more than 70 Islamic community organizations that have joined the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). Therefore, fatwas issued by the MUI have a higher acceptance rate among Muslims compared to fatwas issued by other Islamic organizations [36].

MUI is also actively involved in regulating zakat management in Indonesia. MUI plays a role in providing guidance, fatwas, and directions related to zakat management by institutions such as BAZNAS, BAZIS, or LAZIS. since 1982 until now, MUI has issued more than 19 fatwas on zakat [37]. Since 1982-2021 he has issued various fatwas on zakat; its collection, management, and distribution have even been published in a book "MUI Zakat Fatwa Association 1982-2021" These fatwas are a reference for the implementation of zakat in the country [38]. MUI provides direction and guidance to BAZIS or LAZIS regarding the determination of zakat recipient groups (*mustahiq*). The MUI has authority in defining and detailing groups entitled to receive zakat, including in expanding the meaning of *ashnāf fi sabīlillāh* as *mustahiq* zakat. This helps BAZIS or LAZIS in determining the priorities and allocation of zakat funds by Islamic provisions and needs in the field.

Some of these fatwas on zakat show MUI's efforts in expanding the meaning of *ashnāf fi sabīlillāh* to make it more relevant to the problems of the Ummah today. The expansion of this meaning can be found in the following fatwas:

1. MUI Fatwa of 1982 concerning Tasharufkan Dana Zakat for Productive Activities and Public Benefit

The Fatwa Commission of the Indonesian Ulema Council in its session on February 2, 1982, determined that; Zakat given to the poor can be productive and zakat funds in the

name of *sabîlillâh* can be donated for *mashlahah'âmmah* (public interest) [39]. In various fields, such as *da'wah*, education, health, economy, social, and other relevant fields.

2. MUI Fatwa in 1996 concerning the Provision of Zakat for Scholarships

The provision of zakat for scholarships has been discussed and decided by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) through a fatwa issued on 29 Ramadan 1416/19 February 1996, signed by the Chairman of MUI K.H Hasan Basri and the chairman of the Fatwa Commission Prof. K.H Ibrahim Hosen, love my life (Fatwa Decree Number 120/MUI/1996).

The Leadership Council of the Indonesian Ulema Council hereby conveys that on Saturday the 20th of Ramadhan 1416 Hijri, coinciding with February 10, 1996, Miladiyah, continued on Wednesday 24 Ramad- Han 1416 Hijri, coinciding with February 14, 1996, Miladiyah, the Fatwa Commission of the Indonesian Ulema Council has convened to discuss the provision of zakat for scholarships, namely:

"What is the law on giving zakat for educational purposes, specifically the provision of scholarships?"

About this issue, the Assembly formulated as follows:

"Giving zakat money for educational purposes, especially in the form of scholarships, the law is SAH, because it is included in *ashnâf fi sabîlillah*, which is assistance issued from zakat funds based on the Qur'an surah At-Tawbah verse 60 because the definition of *fi sabîlillâh* according to some *fiqh* scholars from several schools and scholars of *tafsir* is "general lafaznya". Therefore, *qâ'idah ushûliyyah* applies."

3. MUI Fatwa No. 8 of 2011 concerning Amil Zakat

The background to the emergence of MUI Fatwa No. 8 of 2011 concerning Amil Zakat is the emergence of many questions from the public related to Amil Zakat. The MUI's fatwa expands the meaning of *fi sabîlillâh*, which it strips can be used in activities to build awareness of zakat – such as advertising – as long as it is within the limits of fairness, proportionate, and by the rules of Islamic law. Amil Zakat who has obtained a salary from the state or private institution in his duties as Amil is not entitled to receive part of the zakat fund that is part of Amil. While amil zakat who do not receive a salary from the state or private institutions are entitled to receive part of the zakat fund that is part of Amil in return based on the principle of fairness [37].

4. MUI Fatwa no 1 MUNAS 2005 concerning the Utilization of Zakat, Infaq, Alms, and Waqf for the Development of Clean Water and Sanitation Facilities for the Community

The issue of sanitation and clean water supply in Indonesia is the focus of attention of various institutions. In 2015, the MUI released a fatwa containing several important decisions, one of which was as follows [37]:

- 1) The obligation to provide sanitation facilities and access to clean water for the community is the responsibility of the government, which is the implementation of the principle of maintaining human survival.
- 2) The use of zakat funds for projects to build clean water and sanitation facilities is allowed under the following conditions:
 - a. There is no urgent need that must be immediately met by zakat recipients who are in an emergency condition.

- b. The benefits of such clean water and sanitation facilities should be reserved for the public interest and welfare of the ummah (*mashlahah 'âmmah*) as well as good deeds (*al-birr*).
 - 3) The use of infak, alms, and waqf funds for projects to build clean water and sanitation facilities is permissible, as long as the purpose is in the public interest and common welfare.
5. MUI Fatwa No. 15 of 2011 concerning Withdrawal, Maintenance, and Distribution of Zakat

The MUI makes two decisions in the fatwa relating to the process of collecting, maintaining, and distributing zakat. Among these provisions alludes to the distribution of zakat funds for *ashnâf fî sabîlillâh* which is expanded in meaning. The MUI states in the fatwa that:

"A foundation or board that serves the poor may receive zakat in the name of *fî sabîlillâh*."

6. Ijtima' Ulama Decree of the 6th Indonesian Fatwa Commission in 2018 concerning Zakat Mal for Legal Aid

Indonesia is a country of laws. The State, as an enforcer of human rights, has a responsibility to provide fair legal guarantees and protection to all its citizens, including those in economically disadvantaged conditions. The 1945 Constitution affirms that "everyone has the right to recognition, guarantee, protection and just legal certainty and equal treatment before the law". However, the fact is that services, assistance, and legal assistance are often difficult to find for most people, especially those in economically disadvantaged groups. In solving a legal problem, the community is often faced with very high costs, which results in difficulties in obtaining optimal legal assistance. This fatwa also explains that it is possible to use zakat for the construction of a just legal system, and this can be done through *ashnâf fî sabîlillâh*. The use of zakat for the construction of a just legal system should aim to:

- 1) Ensure the implementation of rules by Islamic principles.
- 2) To ensure general well-being (*maslahah 'âmmah*).
- 3) Protecting the values of religion, life, intellect, heredity, and property.
- 4) Correcting policies that are not in line with religious teachings.

There are several important points in the fatwa related to the use of zakat funds in the context of legal defence and the development of a just legal system. One of the important points is that zakat can be used to fight legal cases related to the needs of Islam as well as Muslims. It is considered part of *ashnâf fî sabîlillâh* which has been expanded in meaning by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI).

7. Fatwa 23 of 2020 concerning the Utilization of Zakat, Infak, and Shadaqah Assets to Overcome the Covid-19 Outbreak and Its Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted most countries in the world in various fields, such as; education, health, economy, welfare, and so on. Many problems related to living standards arise in the community as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Questions have arisen in the community regarding the regulation of using ZIS funds to help overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact. MUI, through its fatwa commission, responded and issued fatwa number 23 of 2020 on April 16, 2020, regarding zakat, infak, and sadaqah during the pandemic progressively and responsively [37].

8. Fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council Number: 66 of 2022 concerning the Utilization of Zakat Assets for Disaster Management and Its Impact

The majority of Indonesia geographically has the potential to experience disasters such as tsunamis, floods, and earthquakes that require rapid response. Although the provisions of Islamic law that identify the eight categories of zakat recipients do not explicitly mention victims of natural disasters, however, if we evaluate the situation and circumstances, many people are victims of natural disasters and suffer property losses and others. Some questions arise among the public regarding the rules for using Zakat funds for disaster management efforts and their consequences.

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) believes that it is necessary to issue a fatwa regulating the use of zakat assets in the context of disaster management and its effects so that it can be a clear guideline in this regard. Based on several verses and hadiths related to zakat as well as the opinions of scholars quoted from some of us and the rules of fiqhiyah. MUI issued fatwa Number 66 of 2022 concerning the Utilization of Zakat Assets for Disaster Management and Its Impact which was stipulated on October 19, 2022.

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) has committed to expanding the meaning of "ashnâf fî sabîlillâh" to make the use of zakat funds relevant to the problems of the ummah that develop in the present. Several fatwas and decisions that have been issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) regarding the use of zakat above reflect a progressive approach to the use of these funds. These efforts reflect a positive response to evolving social, economic, and humanitarian dynamics. By expanding the meaning of ashnâf fî sabîlillâh, MUI provides a wider space to use zakat funds in various contexts for the general benefit (mashlahah 'âmmah) and various virtues including legal case defence, scholarship provision, salary assistance for amil zakat, zakat management foundation operations, zakat awareness promotion, disaster management, provision of clean water needs, and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The concept of sabîlillâh (public benefit) involves support from zakat can be given to physical infrastructure such as public facilities such as health care facilities, education, da'wah, sanitation and clean water facilities, disaster management, and so on, as well as in non-physical forms such as; security, order, law enforcement, scientific development, and culture. However, the use of zakat must pay attention to emergency considerations (dharûriyyât), interests (hâjjiyyât), and quality improvement (tahsîniyyât) to be by the basic principles of zakat and still meet the basic needs of zakat mustahiq, especially the poor and poor.

These steps reflect MUI's efforts in responding to various social and economic problems faced by Muslims in Indonesia. Thus, MUI makes the use of zakat funds a more flexible instrument in creating the welfare and safety of the people, as well as responding to the challenges of the growing times. It also reflects the awareness of the importance of ensuring that zakat truly provides maximum benefits to people in need in various emergencies and urgent needs. All of these decisions aim to create a harmonious life order and provide clear guidelines in the management of zakat funds and the like. MUI's decision to expand the meaning and scope of ashnâf fî sabîlillâh as stated in the various fatwas issued above is by the concept of maqâshid as-syarî'ah.

Maqâshid as-syarî'ah in terminology, according to various scholars varies. Ibn 'Assyria describes maqâshid as-syarî'ah as a series of meanings and wisdom deduced by the makers of sharia in all or most sharia law. 'Alal al-Fasi defines maqâshid as-syarî'ah as the purpose of sharia and the secret set by Allah Almighty in every sharia law. Ar-Raisuni defined maqâshid as-syarî'ah as the goals set by the shari'ah for the benefit of the slave. Meanwhile, Wahbah Az-Zuhaili describes maqâshid as-syarî'ah as the meanings and objectives inferred in all laws or most laws, as well as the goals of the sharia and the secrets established by Allah Almighty in every sharia law. Overall, it can be concluded that maqâshid as-syarî'ah refers to the purpose, objective, or purpose that Allah desires in every religious regulation to ensure the benefit of His servants [40].

Maqâshid as-syarî'ah reflects the values and objectives of the law implicit in its regulations to safeguard the basic aspects of human life that cannot be separated from each other, as they support each other and have related roles.

Maqâshid as-syarî'ah includes five basic concepts, namely: safeguarding religion (hifdzu ad-Dîn), soul (hifdzu an-Nafs), heredity (hifdzu an-Nasl), reason (hifdzu al-'Aql) and property (hifdzu al-Mâl) as well as concepts initiated by Imam ash-Shatibi and also other scholars in the field of maqâshid as-syarî'ah. Distributing zakat funds for mashlahah 'âmmah, such as da'wah, education, economy, health, and law through the door of ashnâf fî sabîlillâh can help individuals and communities to realize justice and welfare. With it religion, soul, offspring, reason and property will be well preserved. In addition, the steps taken and decided by the MUI in expanding the scope of ashnâf fî sabîlillâh are also by the concept of maqâshid as-syarî'ah proposed by Ibn 'Assyria. In this concept, maqâshid as-syarî'ah is divided into two parts, namely maqâshid as-syarî'ah al-âmmah and maqâshid as-syarî'ah al-khâsshah. Maqâshid as-syarî'ah al-âmmah covers the general goals and objectives of the Shari'a, such as preserving a beneficial system, safeguarding the benefit, avoiding damage, realizing equal rights between people, and implementing the Shari'a by the rules established by Allah. Meanwhile, maqâshid as-syarî'ah al-khâsshah discusses the specific purpose of shari'a, especially in the context of muamalat, and covers various issues of maqâshid as-syarî'ah, such as family law, the use of property, legislation, testimony, and so on.

CONCLUSION

Based on this research, it can be concluded that the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) seeks to expand the meaning of ashnâf fî sabîlillâh in various zakat fatwas issued so that the use of zakat funds becomes relevant to the problems of the ummah that develop today through the door of ashnâf. MUI provides wider space to use the ashnâf portion of zakat funds in various contexts for public benefit (mashlahah 'âmmah) and various benefits including legal case defence, scholarship provision, salary assistance for amil zakat, zakat management foundation operations, zakat awareness promotion, disaster management, provision of clean water needs, and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The efforts of the Indonesian Ulema Council MUI in expanding the meaning of ashnâf fî sabîlillâh in various contexts on public benefit (mashlahah 'âmmah) and various virtues including legal case defence, scholarship provision, salary assistance for amil zakat, zakat management foundation operations, zakat awareness promotion, disaster management, provision of clean water needs, and response to the COVID-19 pandemic are very relevant to the concept of maqâshid as-syarî'ah.

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Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the main contributor to this paper, all authors read and approved the final paper, and all authors declared no conflict of interest.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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