

THE MOSQUES

Allah Almighty has made the whole of the surface of earth as the place of worship for the Muslim community. A Muslim is permitted to perform his prayer on any piece of land provided it is clean. The mosques are the most sacred places on earth as they are the houses of Allah. Allah has promised great rewards for those who construct mosques. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said that if anybody builds a mosque purely for the pleasure of Allah He will build a house for him in the Paradise (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

When a Muslim proceeds to a mosque, it is as though he is going to seek an audience with his Creator. This is a very important and sacred occasion for him. So he exploits this opportunity to recite prayers as much as he can. While proceeding to the mosque Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) recited the prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ فِي قَلْبِي نُورًا وَفِي سَمْعِي نُورًا وَفِي بَصَرِي نُورًا وَعَنْ يَمِينِي نُورًا وَعَنْ شِمَالِي نُورًا وَإِمَامِي نُورًا وَخَلْفِي نُورًا وَفَوْقِي نُورًا وَتَحْتِي نُورًا وَاجْعَلْ لِي نُورًا (مسلم)

“O my God make light in my heart, light in my ears, light in my eyes and light on my right and left and front and behind and above me and below me and make light for me” (Muslim)

It is also a tradition of the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to recite this prayer while entering the mosque:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ وَبِوَجْهِهِ الْكَرِيمِ وَسُلْطَانِهِ الْقَدِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

“I seek the refuge of the Great Lord and by His noble face and His everlasting power from the damned Satan” (Abu Dawood). Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said "Whoever recites this prayer, Satan will not be able to do any harm to him throughout the day. One should step into the mosque with his right leg and exit with his left leg. While exiting one should recite this prayer:

اللهم اغفر لي ذنوبي وافتح لي أبواب فضلك

“O my God forgive me for my sins and open for me the doors of your bounty” (Ahmad, Tirmizi, Ibn Maja). Going to the mosque and sitting there has its own reward. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: one who goes into and comes out of the mosque will be made a guest of the Lord in his Paradise” (Muslim).

Veneration of the Mosque

It's a matter of etiquette that if one enters the mosque and he has already performed the ablution then before taking his seat he should perform two-cycle salat which is known as “*tahiyyatul masjid*” [veneration of the mosque]. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) ordained that:

«إِذَا دَخَلَ أَحَدُكُمُ الْمَسْجِدَ فَلْيَرْكَعْ رُكْعَتَيْنِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَجْلِسَ» when any of you enter a mosque he should perform two rak'ats before sitting (*most of the narrators*).

Which Mosques Have the Highest Rank?

Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: Don't make journeys intentionally to any mosque other than the three mosques: first, Masjid-i-Haraam (Ka'ba); second, my own mosque (Masjid-i-Nabavi); and third, Masjid al-Aqsa (most narrators). According to another narration, Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said the reward for praying in my mosque is 1000 times more than praying in any other mosque except the Masjid-i-Haraam or Ka'ba (*Bukhari*).

What Acts are Reprehensible within the Mosque?

1. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Those who have consumed onion, garlic or *karath* (an odorous vegetable) should not come near our mosque because things which offend the humans also offend the angels (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). Thus if anybody has consumed any such thing he ought to chew cloves or any other good smelling thing to mitigate the bad odours.
2. One should not raise his voice while in the mosque even in the remembrance of Allah as it disturbs the salat.
3. Once Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) came to the mosque and saw a person sitting there with his knees stuck with his chest and his fingers intertwined. The Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) beckoned him not to sit with intertwined fingers. He could not follow. Then he instructed that if any one you comes to the mosque he should not sit with intertwined fingers as it is a satanic gesture. So long as you stay in the mosque you are in the state of salat until you exit from it (Ahmad).
4. Spitting or blowing of the nose.
5. To use the mosque as transit route.

6. One should not take ablution in the sitting space of the mosque, particularly when it dirties the space. But if there is a separate place for ablution one should use it.
7. To bring food to the mosque unless it is meant for a *mu'takif* or a wayfarer who has no other place to consume it.
8. To recite poetry in the mosque unless it is in praise of Allah or in eulogization of the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) or on Islamic or moral themes. Once Hazrat Umar Ibn Khattab, *RadhiAllahu Anhu* found Hazrat Hassan [the poet of Islam] reciting some poetry in the mosque. He forbade him from doing so. Hassan replied I used to recite poems while a superior being than you [the Prophet] was present. Then he asked Abu Hurairah, “By Allah, do you remember that Allah's Messenger ordered me to reply on his behalf saying Allah would help me by His angel Ruhul Qudus (Jibrael)?” Abu Hurairah replied “Yes, I remember it, Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said the same words” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).
9. Commercial activities within the mosque. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: «إِذَا رَأَيْتُمْ مَنْ يَبِيعُ أَوْ يَبْتَاعُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَقُولُوا: لَا أَرْبَحَ اللَّهُ تِجَارَتَكَ» If any of you see others using the mosque for selling and buying then say may Allah not give you any benefit out of this. (Tirmizi, Ha'kim).
10. Loud announcements about lost things. It is reprehensible to go on asking the worshippers loudly about one's lost things. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said that: «مَنْ سَمِعَ رَجُلًا يَنْشُدُ ضَالَّةً فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَلْيَقُلْ: لَا رَدَّهَا اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ، فَإِنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لَمْ تُبْنَ لِهَذَا» if any of you see a person making loud inquiries about his lost thing then he should say may Allah not return it to you. Because mosques are not meant for such business (Muslim).
11. Excessive beautification and ornamentation of the mosques. It detracts the attention of the worshippers and they cannot concentrate on the remembrance of Allah and offer salat to him. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said that: «لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى يَتَبَاهَى النَّاسُ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ» the Last Day will not come unless a time comes when people enter into mutual competition regarding their mosques (Ahmad, Ibn Habban).

Spots Unfit for Performing Salat

1. In mausoleums, graveyards or near graves located in a mosque. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: «لَا تُصَلُّوا إِلَى الْقُبُورِ وَلَا تَجْلِسُوا عَلَيْهَا» Don't pray near the grave that is, never pray making graves as your qiblah nor sit over them (Muslim). According to another narration, Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said that:

«لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسْجِدًا»

Allah Almighty has damned the Jews because they made the graves of their prophets as mosques that is, built places of worship over their graves (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

2. Garbage depots or slaughter houses or tethering places of animals as all such places are unclean. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

«لَا تُصَلُّوا فِي مَبَارِكِ الْإِبِلِ، فَإِنَّهَا مِنَ الشَّيَاطِينِ»

Do not perform prayer at places where the camels kneel down because they are the places of devils. (Ahmad, Abu Dawood).

3. Toilets and wash houses. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

«الْأَرْضُ كُلُّهَا مَسْجِدٌ، إِلَّا الْمَقْبَرَةَ وَالْحَمَامَ» "All the earth is a Masjid (place of worship) except Graveyards and Toilets (Abu Dawood, Tirmizi, Ibn Maja, Ahmad).

4. Thoroughfares.
5. At Top of the Ka'ba.

Salat Inside the Ka'bah

Once Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) accompanied by Hazrat Usama bin Zaid, Bilal bin Rabah and Uthman bin Talha, entered the Ka'bah and closed the door. When the door was opened Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar asked Hazrat Bilal if Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) performed salat inside the Ka'ba. He said yes between the two pillars on the right he performed it (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Sutrah [Bar]

Once Hazrat Abu Said Khudri was performing salat keeping a *sutrah* in front of him. A young man entered the mosque. The man looked for a passage but did

not find any except from the front of Hazrat Khudri, *RadhiAllahu Anhu*. When he tried to pass in front him he barred him. When he tried again he rebuked him. The young man became furious over this and he lodged a complaint with Marwan bin Hakam, the Governor of Madinah. Hazrat Khudri, *RadhiAllahu Anhu* explained that he heard Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) saying that if any of you is performing salat keeping a *sutrah* before him and somebody wants to pass from his front he should forbid him. If he tries a second time he should rebuke him because he is a Satan (Bukhari and Muslim).

Sutrah literally means a bar. That is, if somebody wants to offer salat he must keep before him some bar like a pillar or wall or a baton. If he finds nothing he should mark a line on the ground. It will serve the purpose of *sutrah*. It is understood that the *sutrah* of the imam is deemed to be the *sutrah* for all his followers. In dense crowd or extraordinary conditions crossing through the rows is permissible. It is also proved on some occasions the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) prayed without keeping a *sutrah*.

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