

THE CONSTRUCTIVE ASPECT OF ISLAMIC CULTURE

THE COMMON DEFINITION OF CONSTRUCTION IN ISLAM:

Islam has permitted the people to construct on earth and has made them realise to pay attention over this matter because man remains safe from cold, heat and rain because of this. It is one of the blessings of Allah.

Allah Almighty says:

﴿وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ جُلُودِ الْأَنْعَامِ بُيُوتًا تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ إِقَامَتِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَصْوَابِهَا وَأَوْبَارِهَا وَأَشْعَارِهَا أَثْنَا وَمِئَةً إِلَى حِينٍ﴾ النحل: ٨٠

Translation of Meaning: "It is Allah Who made your habitations homes of rest and quiet for you; and made for you, out of the skins of animals, (tents for) dwellings, which ye find so light (and handy) when ye travel and when ye stop (in your travels); and out of their wool, and their soft fibres (between wool and hair), and their hair, rich stuff and articles of convenience (to serve you) for a time. (Surah An-Nahl, Verse 80)

THE ISLAMIC RULES OF CONSTRUCTION AND TOWN SETTLEMENT:

Islam has set some rules and regulations to construct homes and for the settlement of towns. Some of them are as follows:

1. TO CHOOSE THE BEST PLACE: A Muslim, based on his necessities and means, constructs his home on smooth planes or mountains. The Holy Qur'an states in this regard:

﴿وَكَانُوا يَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا آمِنِينَ﴾ الحجر: ٨٢

Translation of Meaning : "Out of the mountains did they hew (their) homes, (feeling themselves) secure. (Surah Al-Hijr, Verse 82)

In another verse, Allah Almighty says:

﴿تَنْخِذُونَ مِنْ سُهُولِهَا قُصُورًا وَتَنْحِتُونَ الْجِبَالَ﴾ الأعراف: ٧٤

Translation of Meaning: "Ye build for yourselves palaces and castles in (open) plains, and carve out homes in the mountains..."
(Surah Al-A'raaf, Verse 74)

2. TO HAVE RESOURCES FOR COMFORT AT HOME: As for example, fresh air, space, greenery, and a special place for women etc.

There should be a toilet in homes. Before the advent of Islam, there was no concept of toilets among Arabs. After the battle of Trench, Muslims constructed for the first time a toilet and ablution place (Wuzu Khana) along with the mosque. After that, the tradition of making toilets at homes was made common. It is reported by Hazrat Abu Ayub (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"إِذَا أَتَيْتُمُ الْغَائِطَ؛ فَلَا تَسْتَقْبِلُوا الْقِبْلَةَ وَلَا تَسْتَدْبِرُوهَا، وَلَكِنْ شَرِّقُوا أَوْ غَرِّبُوا" (متفق عليه)

Translation: "When you have come in the toilet, do not face or keep your back towards the Qiblah, instead face towards the East or the West."

Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari says that 'When we came to Syria so the toilets here were made facing Qiblah. When we went inside for the call of nature, we turned and repented from Allah.' (Bukhari, Muslim)

After that, Muslims started making toilets in the mosques and homes.

While constructing a house, the most important thing for a Muslim is to consider is that the mosque is near to the home, if it is not possible, then a room at home should be specified for prayers or the Muslims construct a mosque together in their Mohalla or neighbourhood. There is a Hadith that Prophet (ﷺ) has instructed to construct mosques in neighbourhood, to purify them and make them fragrant.

"أَمَرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ تُتَّخَذَ الْمَسَاجِدُ فِي الدُّورِ ، وَأَنْ تُطَهَّرَ وَتُطَيَّبَ" (ابن ماجه)

Translation: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) ordered to designate a place of prayer in homes and to purify and perfume it". (Ibn-e-Majah)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ، " أَنَّ رَجُلًا مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ أَرْسَلَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ تَعَالَ فَخُطَّ لِي مَسْجِدًا فِي دَارِي أُصَلِّي فِيهِ ، وَذَلِكَ بَعْدَ مَا عَمِيَ ، فَجَاءَ فَفَعَلَ. " (ابن ماجه)

It is reported from Hazrat Abu Huraira (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) that an Ansaari Companion sent a request to Prophet (ﷺ) that kindly come to my home and assign a prayer place in my home where I would pray. At that time, that

Companion had become blind. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) came and fulfilled that Companion's request.

3. SIMPLICITY: The homes of Muslims should show simplicity. Extravagance should be avoided in decorating and constructing the houses. Some 'hujrahs' (apartments) of our guide and leader Holy Prophet (ﷺ) were made up of palm leaves, sand and some were made of bricks. The homes of Muslims were extremely simple during the time of Prophet (ﷺ) and the Rightly-guided Caliphs (R.A), because the main objective of homes is protection from heat, cold and rain, and to save one's family and providing them shelter.

In Islam, this simplicity is fine but not an obligation. Because Islam has not declared the making of beautiful homes and their decoration as 'Haraam', unless it deviates the Muslims from the main objective. That main objective is to seek the pleasure of Allah and to get succeeded in the Hereafter. That is why, Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الضَّيْعَةَ قَتَرُ غُبُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا" (الترمذي)

Translation: "Do not make property; otherwise, you would get involved in the world only." (Tirmizi)

4. TO CLEAN THE HOUSES AND THE ROADS: The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"بَيْنَمَا رَجُلٌ يَمْشِي بِطَرِيقٍ , وَجَدَ غُصْنَ شَوْكٍ عَلَى الطَّرِيقِ , فَأَخْرَهُ فَشَكَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ فَغَفَرَ لَهُ" (البخاري)

Translation: "A person was going somewhere. On his way, he saw a twig full of thorns, so he removed it from the road. Allah got pleased from him just because of this act and forgave him." (Bukhari)

5. SPACIOUS HOUSES AND ROADS: It is reported by Hazrat Abu Huraira (R.A) that the Holy Prophet said:

قَضَى النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا تَشَاجَرُوا فِي الطَّرِيقِ بِسَبْعَةِ أَذْرُعٍ (البخاري)

Translation: “If there is a conflict about the road so leave the road at least of seven hands.” (Bukhari)

This shows that in case of a conflict, the space to leave for the road should be at least seven hands in breadth.

6. IT IS HARAAM TO PLACE A STATUE IN HOUSES, PARKS, TOWNS AND OPEN SPACES OF THE CITIES:

Hazrat Jareer Bin Abdullah (R.A) said that: “There was an idol-house in the Age of Ignorance called *Zul Khalsa*. It was also called ‘Kaaba Yamania’ and ‘Kaaba Shimalia’. The Holy Prophet said to me:

"أَلَا تُرِيحُنِي مِنْ ذِي الْخَلَصَةِ" (البخاري)

Translation: “Why don’t you get me relieved from the pain of Zul Khalsa?”

Therefore, I rode with one hundred and fifty riders there, and we demolished it and killed everyone who was inside. Then I came to Prophet (ﷺ) and told him about this. The Prophet (ﷺ) prayed for us and our tribe Ahmas. (Bukhari)

What Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said about the idol-house, the reason was this that the non-believers of Makkah planned against Islam, and discussed about ways to tease the Prophet (ﷺ) and narrated about the sacred Kaaba. Thus, they planned about showing their enmity against Islam; therefore it was needed to demolish it for prevailing the peace. It is not ordered by Islam to demolish any prayer place of any nation or religion during the peace conditions. Hazrat Umar Farooq (R.A) protected the churches of the Christians during his caliphate. And the Muslim emperors in India protected the prayer places of this country and trusted properties for them as it is witnessed by history.

7. CONSTRUCTION OF MOSQUES IN VILLAGES, MOHALLAS AND CITIES:

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"مَنْ بَنَى مَسْجِدًا لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ بَيْتًا مِثْلَهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ" (مسلم)

Translation: "Whoever constructs a mosque to seek the pleasure of Allah, for him, similarly, Allah has made a home in the Paradise." (Muslim)

When Hazrat Usman (R.A) was stranded in his home, he addressed the people from the roof of his house: 'For Allah's and Islam's sake, I ask you that do you know that when the Prophet's (ﷺ) mosque became shorter in capacity, then Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"مَنْ يَشْتَرِي بُقْعَةَ آلِ فُلَانٍ فَيَزِيدُهَا فِي الْمَسْجِدِ بِخَيْرٍ لَهُ مِنْهَا فِي الْجَنَّةِ" (النسائي)

Translation: "Whoever will buy the land from such and such persons and include them in the mosque, he has the glad tidings of the Paradise", so I bought the land with my wealth and gave it to the mosque.' (Al-Nisaa'i)

8. TO BUILD CASTLES AROUND VILLAGES AND CITIES TO SAVE THEM FROM THE ATTACK OF ENEMIES:

Specially, if there are towns at the borders and there is a risk of the invasion of enemies. The Islamic history is witness about this that Muslims used to settle towns and cities and made castles around them.

9. A MUSLIM SHOULD NOT MAKE HIS HOME HIGH WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF HIS NEIGHBOUR BROTHER:

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said this in terms of the rights of neighbours:

"وَلَا تَسْتَطِلْ عَلَيْهِ بِالْبِنَاءِ فَتَحْجُبَ عَنْهُ الرِّيحَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ" (الطبراني)

Translation: "Do not make your house higher than your neighbour's house without his permission, so that the wind does not get stopped to pass through his house." (Al-Tabraani)

Islam has not stopped to make high houses, but for this, it is important to take your neighbour's permission first, so that the wind could pass through his home and the female's privacy is also retained.

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