

Respecting the Mosque

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ
أَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.
أَمَّا بَعْدُ،

فِيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ، أَوْصِيكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us all increase our devotion towards Allah the Almighty by performing all that He has decreed and abstaining from all that He has prohibited. Hopefully, we will be blessed in this world and in the Hereafter.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A mosque has a significant position for Muslims. The first agenda that Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's blessings and peace be upon him [pbuh]) carried out to strengthen the Muslims when he migrated to Medina was to build the Mosque of Quba 'and the Mosque of Medina. This shows that a mosque is a symbol of strength, harmony and unity of Muslims. The significance of mosques is described by Allah the Almighty in the Quran in Chapter 9 (Surah Al-Taubah), verse (ayat) 18:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى

الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

Which means: *The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, and practise regular charity, and fear none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance.*

Allah the Almighty has reminded us that one of the characteristics of the people of faith is to make full use of the mosque. The Prophet (pbuh) said in a *Hadith* which was narrated by Imam al-Bukhari:

إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الرَّجُلَ يَعْتَادُ الْمَسْجِدَ فَاشْهَدُوا لَهُ بِالْإِيمَانِ

Which means: *“When you see a man frequenting the Masjid, then bear witness that he is truly a faithful believer.”*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Frequently visiting and maintaining the mosque will foster brotherhood and compassion among Muslims. We are required to care for each other. While praying congregationally in the mosque we are asked to straighten the prayer line and to close all gaps in the line. This practice is strongly encouraged to foster love for one another as mentioned in the Prophet’s *Hadith* which was narrated by Imam Muslim:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَمْسَحُ مَنَاكِبَنَا فِي الصَّلَاةِ وَيَقُولُ اسْتَوُوا وَلَا تَخْتَلِفُوا

فَتَخْتَلِفَ قُلُوبُكُمْ

Which means: *The Prophet (pbuh) used to touch our shoulders before the prayers and said: “Keep the line straight, so that there would be no dissension in your hearts.”*

We are also prohibited from eating food with strong odor before entering the mosque as it interferes with the comfort of the mosque congregation. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said in a *Hadith* which was narrated by Imam Muslim:

Which means: *“He who eats them (garlic and onions) should not come near our mosque.”*

Practicing good manners is important in order to keep the mosque clean, fresh and safe. It is also important to establish mutual respect and overlook any differences. Since a mosque is a symbol of unity and strength for Muslims, we must not bring any element that can incite strife because it will weaken Muslims.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The mosque is the center for seeking beneficial knowledge for all Muslims. We need to realize that Muslims will only be confident to face current challenges when they have knowledge, skills and mastery in various areas of life. Therefore, when a gathering of knowledge is being held, we should pay attention by sitting near the teacher instead of talking to each other. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said in a *Hadith* which was narrated by Imam Muslim:

وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَيَتَدَارَسُونَهُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِلَّا نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ
وَعَشِيَّتُهُمُ الرَّحْمَةُ وَحَفَّتُهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ

Which means: *No people get together in a house of the houses of Allah (i.e. a mosque), reciting the Book of Allah, and learning it together among themselves, but calmness (sakinah) comes down to them, (Divine) mercy covers them (from above), and the angels surround them, and Allah makes mention of them among those who are with Him.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Let us ponder on our responsibilities to take care of the mosques (the houses of Allah the Almighty). It is very sad when there is a mosque that is not well kept and that when the call to prayers (*azan*) is heard, only a few people respond to it. At the same time, coffee shops, supermarkets, and the night markets are full of people. Have we lost our sensitivity towards our responsibility to keep the mosque thriving? We should be the ones who invite our children, wives, and neighbors instead of wishing others to initiate the call. It is also the role of the mosque committees to visit the homes of their congregation to know and assist each other and to invite them to the mosque.

Ignoring congregational prayers is a big mistake for Muslims today. How can we claim to be the people who glorify the mosque if we only visit the mosque once a week. Let us respond to Allah's call as He mentioned in the Quran in Chapter 7 (Surah Al-A'raf), verse (*ayat*) 31:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

يَبْنَیْ ءَادَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

Which means: *O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters.*

بَارَكَ اللهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ
مَنِّي وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ، إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ،
وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.