

## ARTICLE

### **Virtues of building a Masjid**

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All praise is for Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and His forgiveness and we believe in Him and rely on Him. We seek refuge with Allah from the evils of our selves and the vices of our deeds. There is no one to misguide whom Allah guides and there is no one to guide whom Allah lets go astray. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah Alone. He has no partner. I also bear witness that our authority, our Prophet and our Master, Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger. May Allah have mercy on him, his household and on his Companions and bless them and send peace on them in great abundance.

He only shall inhabit the places of Allah, worship who believes in Allah and the last day. (At-Tawba, 9:18)

### **FIRST WORDS**

Honourable President, Respected Guests. As-Sal alaykum wa rahmatAllahi wa baraktuh!.

It is a very auspicious moment for us that we about to take part in the foundation of a mosque. It is very fortunate for a Muslim to be able to build a mosque or to take part in its construction. The verse of the Quran recited before you tell us that only those people inhabit mosques who believe in Allah and the last day. Thus, the building of mosques is the sign of a person's faith as also. The first demand on his faith.

### **THE PLACE OF THE MOSQUE**

Every Muslim is aware of the position of a mosque in Islamic Society. The Holy Prophet (saws) has termed as Salah (regular prayer) as a pillar of religion and he said "One who established prayer, in fact, establishes religion! And one who abandons prayers, breaks the founding pillar of religion.

The prayer that is truly approved in the sight of Allah is the one offered with the congregation in the mosque. As for the prayer that is offered at home, the jurist call it an incomplete offering, meaning that it is imperfect. The perfect offering of the prayer is to offer it with the congregation in the mosque.

### **MUSLIMS & THE MOSQUE**

Mosque has been a distinguishing mark of the Muslims for, to whichever region they have gone, the first thing they did was build the house of Allah whether they had their own home or not. It is known of them that they discharged this obligation in very serious and dangerous conditions too when their lives were at stake, when they did not have enough wealth and faced extreme poverty.

### **AN EXAMPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA**

It was about seven years ago that I visited South Africa I went to Cape Town and found that many Malaysians lived there. Of the total number of Muslims there, Malaysians formed an eighty percent majority. I was anxious to know how they reached South Africa and was told of an interesting historical fact which, indeed, is worth learning from.

### **THE MALAYSIANS REACH CAPE TOWN**

These people were of the stock of those Malaysians who had fought the British Colonisers unsuccessfully and had failed to drive them out of their country because of inadequate weapons of war. The Britishers took them as captives and put them in fetters and brought them to Cape Town as slaves. These white people talk of democracy to day but they had subjugated, innumerable people and chained them at their feet. They disallowed them to offer prayers in accordance with their religion not even in their homes. They whipped anyone found offering prayers.

### **PRAYERS IN THE DARK OF THE NIGHT**

These people were made to labour hard and oppressed cruelly. When their masters prepared to sleep in the night, they unchained these Malaysians so that they could go to their barracks and sleep. But they would sneak out one by one to the nearby mountains and offer they day's prayers all together in congregational form.

### **LET US OFFER PRAYERS**

Allah decreed that the Dutch attacked Cape Town seize it. The Britishers had known that the Malaysian were very good fighters and warriors. They were very brave. So, they asked them to drive away the Dutch but the Malaysians said that it made them no difference whether the Britishers had authority of the Dutch, for they were slaves any way. However, they were willing to fight the Dutch on condition that they be permitted to offer prayers in Cape Town and allowed to build a mosque.

### **ONLY THE DEMAND TO BUILD A MOSQUE**

We must heed this fact- these people did not demand monetary remuneration. They did not ask to be set free, and they did not put forth any material condition. Their only demand was that they be allowed to build a mosque. Accordingly, they fought the Dutch very bravely and compelled them to retreat. The Malaysians then reminded the Britishers of their demand and were allowed to build a mosque. These poor people built the first mosque in Cape Town in very trying conditions. They lacked proper tools and material and money. They even could not determine the Qiblah [ The direction in which Muslims Pray, facing the Ka'bah at Makkah} with the result that it is off the mark by 20 degree or 25 degree. Today, the prayer mats are spread at the proper angle which leaves disalligned with the walls.

These brave people did not ask for a house to live in and they did not demand money. They did not seize the opportunity to demand proper food and drink. Their demand was that they should be allowed to construct a mosque. This is the history of the Muslim people. They preferred a mosque over everything else and did not omit the duty of building it in their pitiable condition, too.

### **THE SAVOUR OF FAITH**

In fact, it is such people who receive the savour of faith. We are the ones who have received the religion without effort. We are born to Muslim parents and had to make no sacrifice for Islam. We have spend no money and put in no effort. The result is that we do not realise the worth of Islam. Only those who have worked for it, made sacrifices and undergone trials, know the real worth of it.

### **WE MUST BE THANKFUL**

I have narrated this event so that we may be thankful to Allah that we face no restriction on building

mosques. We are able to build a mosque whenever and wherever we like. Hence, it is our great fortune that we build this mosque and everyone who takes part in it, in whatever way, is indeed worth congratulating.

### **MOSQUE IS INHABITED BY THE WORSHIPPERS WHO PRAY**

I must state here that a mosque is built not with its walls, the bricks and building material. The first mosque which the Prophet (saws) built in Islam at Madinah- the Masjid Nabawi- did not even have a solid roof or firm walls but its walls were made of leaves of date palm. In spite of that there is no mosque more meritorious than it besides the Masjid Al-Haram at Makkah. A mosque is not the area within the walls with a towering minaret and the riches. Rather, it is the name of those who prostrate.

We may build a very large mosque, beautiful in all respects and its walls well adorned, but it is bereft of worshippers. That mosque is deserted. A mosque is inhabited with the worshippers who offer prayers.

### **MOSQUES WHEN THE HOUR WILL APPROACH**

The Holy Prophet (saws) described the Last Day and the Day of Resurrection and he said a time will come: It would look that the Mosques are occupied and they will be well built, very beautiful to look at, but deserted within.

There will be very few worshippers inside. Very few people will use them for the purpose for which they are built. Iqbal has said about it that mosques are built overnight by the believers but their hearts are sinful and they could not become worshippers in ages.

### **CONCLUSION**

Anyway, all those who are participating in building this mosque are very fortunate. May Allah make their task easy. Aameen.

We must remember, however, that our task does not end with the erection of the mosque. In fact, our duty begins after putting the edifice up. We have to inhabit it with worshippers who offer prayers, who recite the Qur'an in its precincts and remember Allah often.

The Mosque occupies a central position in Islamic society. It is here that life is fashioned, character built and manners shaped. Mosques are built for these purposes. It is, then, occupied in the literal sense and the figurative sense.

May Allah make this mosque a source of goodness and blessing for the people of the neighbourhood. May He cause these people to fulfill their obligations and may they inhabit this mosque and keep it occupied. Aameen.