

Masjids: Status, Mission and Role in the Society

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds Who says, "Only he should tend Allah's houses of worship who believes in Allah and the Last Day, and is constant in prayer, and spends in charity, and stands in awe of none but Allah! such people may hope to be among the rightly guided." I bear witness that there is no god due to be worshipped but Allah, the Most High; and I bear witness that Muhammad (PBUH) is His Slave and Messenger; may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him, his family, companions, and whoever follows his footsteps and guidance to the Day of Judgment.

Of high ranks, masjids are of cardinal importance in Islam; they are the most beloved places in them earth to Allah, the Exalted, and they are the places where the pious and the righteous offer their acts of worship to Him, the Most High. In recognition of this great honor of masjids, Allah added them to His Name, a point that is crystal clear in the Saying of Allah, "The mosques are for God's worship -- so do not invoke anyone else along with God" and in the Hadith of the Prophet (PBUH), "The parts of the land dearest to God are its mosques" and "Masjids are the houses of every pious person."

In truth, Masjids are all-inclusive schools where souls are fed with observing the *Dhikr* of Allah and the recitation of the Glorious Quran, where minds are built on a basis of wise and robust awareness, and where young generations are brought up on the noble values and ethics. As for the construction of masjids, it has to do with both the construction of buildings as well as building of robust minds. Allah, Glorified is He, has prepared a great reward for those who are engaged in the construction of masjids, a fact recorded in the Saying of Allah, the Almighty, "[They worship] in the houses which God has allowed to be raised for the remembrance of His name, morning and evening, people who are not distracted by trade or commerce from the remembrance of God and the observance of prayer and the payment of the zakat -- fearing a Day when hearts and eyes will be convulsed" and in the Hadith of the Prophet (PBUH) reading, "If anyone goes out in the morning or in the evening to the mosque, God will prepare for him his food in paradise as often as he goes out in the morning or in the evening" and "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 a mention of them among those who are with Him."

For this reason, the purified Sharia urged Muslims to build, maintain, and preserve masjids. This is evidenced by the Hadith of the Prophet (PBUH), "He who builds a mosque for Allah, Allah would build for him (a house) in Paradise like it." As for those who care about masjids, they are of high ranks, a point that is evidenced by the fact that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) asked about the affairs of the women who used to sweep his holy masjid. When he (PBUH) was told that she had passed away, he offered the funeral prayer over her in recognition of her high rank in the sight of Allah, the Most High.

When it comes to the etiquette that should be observed when visiting the masjids, there is a list that should be duly observed, including: - wearing the best clothes and using a good perfume that suits the sacredness of the place. The prayer in the masjid is communicating with his Lord, let alone the fact that masjids are the places where the most righteous are gathered and where angels come down from the heaven, which means that the prayer should be dressed in the best way. On that, Allah, the Almighty, says, "O Children of Adam, dress yourself properly whenever you are at worship" and the Prophet (PBUH) said, "Allah is the One for Whom you should be well-dressed."

The list of the etiquette also includes walking to masjids in serenity; this is evidenced by the Hadith of the Prophet (PBUH), "If you hear the *Iqamah*, you must walk to the prayer (place) with tranquility and dignity." As such, masjids are the places of serenity and tranquility. That is why Muslims are prohibited to raise their voices in the masjids. On that, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "He who prays holds intimate converse with his Lord, so he must consider how he does so, and none of you must recite the Qur'an more loudly than others." In the same vein, Muslims are banned to conduct buying or selling in the masjid, a point that is crystal clear in the Hadith of the Prophet (PBUH), "These masjids are only for remembrance of God, prayer and recitation of the Qur'an."

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds; may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon the last and the seal of all Prophets and Messengers - our master Muhammad -,
his family and companions.

Masjids perform an important role and carry out a great mission in the fields of education, spreading the true image of Islam, correcting the misconceptions, building the spiritual values, spreading the best manners, and showing the basis of how to maintain a just approach of dealing with people - an approach that is based on righteousness and justice while keeping away from fraud, cheating, greed, monopoly, and exploitation - an approach that takes what is lawful into account and that keeps away from all forms of what is unlawful and indecent deeds, whether
openly or in secret.

On the level of society, the masjid's societal role is as important as its spiritual one. It is through masjids that people can cooperate with each other to do what is beneficial for their country and people in an atmosphere of solidarity, mutual mercy, relieving hardships, showing kindness to the poor and the needy, and promoting the humanitarian bonds among these hearts full of belief and that aspire to the Bounty of the All-Merciful, the Mercy-Giving - a manner that realizes the essence of the one body projected in the Hadith, "The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, fellow-feeling is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever" and "If anyone relieves a Muslim believer from one of the hardships of this worldly life, Allah will relieve him of one of the hardships of the Day of Resurrection. If anyone makes it easy for the one who is indebted to him (while finding it difficult to repay), Allah will make it easy for him in this worldly life and in the Hereafter, and if anyone conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah helps
His slave as long as he helps his brother."

O Allah! Protect our country, Egypt, and all the world's countries from all evil.