

The Role of Mosques in Urban Development

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

ABSTRACT: Mosque is the first and the most important base of Muslims in the formation of global government. At the beginning, this base was established by prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the place of promoting and spreading Islam, a very strong structure that no other places in the world can reach its purity, sanctity and charm. Mosque is the place where people can have privacy with God, a place for meeting beloved and praying Him and confabulate with Him. Lovers in the mosque will never feel tired of staying there and their love will increase and they reach their beloved. It should be mentioned that any place built to pray God and doing Shari affairs of Muslims is mostly valued, but some are more special than other places.

Keywords: Mosque, Muslims, Holy Place, Holy Quran, Praying

INTRODUCTION

After the advent of Islam, mosque is the first comprehensive base established by the Prophet (PBUH) for spreading and promoting a comprehensive and complete religion, science and practice of divine laws. During history, many people have suffered difficulties in forming this base, the holy place where people and different groups come together for different occasions to prove the strength and stability of their promises to save society from any external and internal sworn enemies.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, mosque expansion begun in all parts of the country which increased tendency of people, especially the educated young toward this holy and divine base.

The importance of mosque is to the extent that Imam Ja'far Sadiq (AS) states: "anyone who prays God at home, then goes to mosque and prays with others, it comes out with their goodness." Therefore, based on legend, when people are going to go there, it seems they are planning to visit the house of God, and God Himself.

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Definition of mosque

Al-Masjed (p. Masajed) is defined as mosque, every place to worship and pray God.

In Aghrab it's written: "the root of mosque is praying, whether with bowing or not."

Ragheb states: "السجود اصله التظامن و التذلل". Tabarsi says: "worship in word is humility and in Sharia it is defined as putting the forehead on the ground."

However, mosque is the name of a place to worship and pray. In sura of Al-Jin, verse 18 we have "وَ

"أَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا"

"And the places of worship are only for Allah, so pray not unto anyone along with Allah"

It has been said, mosque in this verse is implying the mosques in which people pray God, and no one other than God is prayed.

Therefore, if in mosques we pray God, and at the same time heart hopes to close to others, it implies the verse "لا دعوا مع الله احدا"

In mosque the forehead should be placed on the pure soil of Karbala, and the heart should be cleaned of any doping banning divine light.

The importance and role of mosques in urban development

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) states: there are seven deeds reward after death of man: Planting palm trees, picking wells, flowing the rivers, building mosque, writing book, teaching knowledge, and righteous son who ask forgiveness to his parents.

In any city where a mosque is built, the door of sin and error is closed to its people.

Therefore, mosques are houses of God and we should increase moral aspect of city by increasing and developing mosques and helping those who are building mosque.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (AS) state from his father (AS): "When the will of God is to doom the earth, The Lord will state: if there were no body that make friend to please me, and build-up my mosques, and ask my forgiveness in daybreaks, I certainly will reveal them in their wake."

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (AS) states: "God will prepare a house in the Heaven to anyone who builds a mosque." Barghi states from this Imam that anyone who builds a mosque is like a dabchick who builds a house in sand.

In another place Imam Ja'far Sadiq (AS) states anyone who enter mosque to pray God, God will accept them as His Pilgrims, so go to the mosque to be much more the Pilgrims of God.

Reward and virtues of going to the mosque

Prophet Mohammad (PBHUM) says: "Anyone who frequently go to the mosque, will achieve one of the

followings: a religious brother who can assist in the way of God, a knowledge which can lead others or free them from destruction, the mercy which they expect or the sin that leaves to please God”

In another narrative Imam Baqir (AS) says: “anyone who builds a mosque, even if it’s as small as a nest of sand grouse, God will build a house for him in Heaven.”

THE POSITION OF MOSQUE

Mosque is not the place for sleeping or making living, but a place for gathering of Muslims to enhance the word of Allah. Therefore, it’s not appropriate to infect this holy place with the worst external and internal affairs. At the time of being in mosque, we should never ask vain and absurd questions that make us forgetting the name of God from the heart.

" يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ "

“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.”

When praying God, Imam Hassan-Ibn Ali (AS) wore his best clothes, he was asked: O the son of Messenger of God! Why you are wearing your best clothes? He answered: God is beautiful and loves beauty, and I do this for my God. God has stated: خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ, when you are praying God, wear your best clothes, so due to this statement I like to wear my best clothes when praying.

Expanding praying culture in mosque

Due to the fact that praying in mosque is recommended in narratives of Imams (AS), therefore, to expand this affair we should provide a background in which praying God in mosques and in group be replaced by praying at home and alone. The first step in this regard should be taken by the authorities to make the others to follow them in paying attention to mosques and praying there, since according to Imams, praying God in mosque is more valued.

Mosque and leisure time

For scientific, religious and social progress, some steps should be taken such as holding religious debates sessions and eliminating doubts, and teaching different sciences using experts in various areas and classes for familiarity with the concepts of Koran and Nahj- al-Balagheh. Holding art classes in mosques is also another example that fills leisure time of youth.

Ways to motivate people, especially youth, to the mosque

If the mosque be changed to a place for high human development, there is no excuse to escape from it, hence interest of youth increases for participating there. Meanwhile, if there be a bed in which people voluntarily go to the mosques, ignoring any material benefits, the amount of people going there and their familiarity with mosque would be increased. Factors that increase motivation and interest of people to mosques include:

1. To act as يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ
2. Regarding the problems of young people in mosque
3. Activate mosques in all religious, political, social and cultural areas

Reasons of unwillingness of youth to go to mosques

Unfortunately, in some of the cities, mosque is considered only as a place for spending leisure time. Although, it’s good to go mosque even only to spend leisure time. In this regard, accurate and basic management of mosque can have role on filling leisure time of people and youth with religious aims. If the mosques are used as a tool to achieve non-divine and worldly aims, people will be more away from it.

Long speeches at mosques are one of the causes youth apathy from mosques. If the preacher and speaker use short and useful sentences in short time full of scientific and ideological information, people will be more attracted to the mosque.

The role of mosque and its centrality in expansion of Islamic culture

At this time, centrality of mosque is more sensed, since mosques are place where name of God is prayed and people in there try to do good deeds and develop their religious ideas. The role of mosque is more significant when a fact is explored by religious scholars in the mosques, and the bases of Islam and society play role in removing doubts.

SOME OF THE DAMAGES AND SOLUTIONS

In some cities, mosques are in hands of some special people and are open to public only in some special occasions; a deal discourages people from going to mosques and decreases trust of people to board of trustee of mosque. Therefore, making mosques exclusive, and opening it only for praying time and decorating it without paying attention to the spiritual aspects of House of God and have material and financial benefits of them are factors that prevent people from going to mosque and change their view toward it.

A mosque where there is no facility for people and only is open to public during praying time, or funeral ceremonies and advertising speeches, is only named as mosque and in fact is a place for business, advertisement and entertainment to achieve its worldly and immoral objectives.

Lack of entertaining and educational facilities in mosques, and praying God only for boasting and hypocrisy are other preventive factors that make youth to go toward wrong ways.

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said to Abouzar: “at the time of being in mosque, God gives you a position in which angels send blessings to every breath and ten of your sins are erased.”

Therefore, accurate management in mosques can prevent any problem. Workers and board of trustees in mosques should try to develop the mosques, introduce them to all people, and turn mosques to the main base for

fighting enemies of Islam and place of worldwide advertisement of Holy Quran and Ahl- al-Beyt.

Mosque officials should sacrifice themselves to teach sacrifice and forgiveness to others. Ali-Ibn Ebrahim states from his father and he from Imam Jafar Sadeq (AS) that: "Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said: backbiting is more facilitating in destruction of Muslim's religion than leprosy in his inside." He also said: "Prophet (PBUH) says: sitting in mosque waiting for time of praying is like worshipping God. He was asked: O Messenger of God! What causes this sitting not to be worshipping, he answered: backbiting"

BEST MOSQUES

All mosques are Houses of Allah and these houses are holy, best and clean, in which there is no citation except the name of God. During early history of Islam and after that, some mosques have taken special name and place: the best and first mosque is Masjid al-Haram, Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, Al-Aqsa Mosque, Koufe mosque, congregational mosques of each city and then the other mosques.

It should be mentioned that any place built to pray God and doing Shari affairs of Muslims is mostly valued, but some are more special than other places.

Imam Sadiq (AS) stated from his ancestors that Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said: "praying in my mosque is equal to ten times of praying in other mosques, except Masjid al-Haram in which praying is equal to thousands of other praying."

To show the value of mosque and equalitating development of mosques with faith to God and the world coming is represented best in sura al-tuba: اجعلتم سقاية الحاج و امامرة المسجد الحرام كمن امن بالله واليوم الآخر وجاهد

"Count ye the slaking of a pilgrim's thirst and tendance of the inviolable place of worship as (equal to the worth of) him who believeth in Allah and the last day, and striveth"

CONCLUSION

Brief reviewing of mosques in Iran represent that many people have attempted to develop mosques financially or physically, while others try to destruct it and prevail cultural invasion, since their faith become infected by pagan and they are not modifiable; scaring them from the punishment of Allah is the same with not scaring.

While, in the shadow of the sacrifice and efforts of Ahl-al-bayt (AS), and with the efforts of Islamic Republic of Iran, mosques are free from filth and impurities and internal and external enemies are unable to reach them. However, sometimes it has been seen that some narrow-minded jobber with predetermined conspiracies try to kill people in this holy place to discourage believers from going to mosques, but their effort has negative effect and the love of Muslims toward mosque and God is ever-increasing.

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