

Love for the Masājid

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The masājid are the Houses of Allāh ﷻ and they should therefore be so beloved to a believer that his utmost desire should be to spend all of his time in them. In fact, every believer should entertain this thought, that if he had no other commitments, he would have spent his entire time in the masājid which have been described as the most beloved places to Allāh ﷻ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

*The most beloved places to Allāh ﷻ are the masājid.
(Muslim)*

For a believer, the heart should always yearn to be in the masjid and even when occupied with matters of the world, such as family, work, etc., it should always remain attached to the masjid. Mālik ibn Dīnār ؓ has stated that a believer inside the masjid is like a fish in water and a munāfiq (hypocrite) in the masjid is like a bird in a cage. A fish naturally has no desire to be out of water and if it is taken out, it will long to return and remain restless for as long as it is out of water. Similar is the case of a believer and how he feels about being away from the masjid. On the other hand, a munāfiq will feel uncomfortable in the masjid and anxiously wait for the ṣalāh to end, just as how a bird feels uncomfortable in a cage and desires to be released. The point to reflect upon is do we feel restless outside the masjid or in the masjid?

This statement encourages us to inculcate love for the masājīd, thereby visiting them frequently and remaining within them for as long as possible. If for any particular reason, or due to worldly necessities, one cannot remain longer in the masjid, the desire for staying longer and the urge to return at the first opportunity should at least be present in the heart. It is indeed regrettable to witness that even at ṣalāh times, many Muslims remain sitting at home or wandering the streets instead of attending the masājīd and performing ṣalāh. And many who attend, come as late as possible and leave as soon as possible after ṣalāh, only to hang around outside with friends. Many have become so negligent that in their haste to leave, they discard the performance of sunnah mu'akkadah and witr ṣalāh as well.

Frequenting the Masājīd is a Sign of Īmān

Love for the masjid, which is indicated by the desire to be present therein, is a sign of a believer and very rewarding in the Hereafter.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

When you see a person frequenting the masjid then bear witness to his Īmān. (At-Tirmidhī)

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has also said,

There are seven people whom Allāh will give shade in the shade of His Throne on the Day when there will be no shade except the shade of His Throne: ... (one of them is) a person whose heart remains attached to the masājīd... (Al-Bukhārī, Muslim)

If the condition of the heart is not such, then one should rectify it by compelling himself to come to the masjid at least fifteen to twenty minutes before jamā'ah (congregational prayer) time and engage in some form of 'ibādah. If one finds it difficult to come any earlier than the jamā'ah time, then one should try and remain in the masjid for some time after the ṣalāh. Moreover, it would also be beneficial to participate regularly in the durūs (lessons of Qur'ān or Ḥadīth) or similar Dīnī programmes that take place in the masjid.

Reward for Performing Ṣalāh Close to the Imām

Another virtue of the masjid relates to the closeness of one's position to the Imām when in ṣalāh. The closer one is, the more virtuous one's ṣalāh becomes. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

If people came to know of what (reward) there is in calling out (the adhān) and (performing ṣalāh in) the first row and they could not attain this (reward) except if they drew lots, they would definitely draw lots. (Al-Bukhārī, Muslim)

Due to our negligence in regard to Dīn and the Hereafter, we have become ignorant of even such rewarding virtuous acts. In order to understand this, it would help to cite an example in purely materialistic terms. If for instance, a masjid was to announce that all those performing ṣalāh in the first row would be awarded a sum as little as ten pounds, for every ṣalāh, one would witness that the first row is filled well before the adhān. Although not a big sum of money, but

multiply it by five, for the five daily ṣalāh, and then multiply that by seven, for the seven days of the week, it would add up to a week's wages! Unfortunately, we haven't accorded even the importance and value of ten pounds to the virtue mentioned by Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Worldly Affairs Are Impermissible in the Masājid

It should also be remembered that to engage in anything related to worldly affairs whilst in the masjid is not allowed. The acts permissible in the masjid are those which relate to the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ, such as ṣalāh, the recitation of the Qur'ān, dhikr, listening to lectures or durūs (lessons) of Qur'ān & Aḥādīth, etc. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

They (the masājid) are only for the remembrance of Allāh, ṣalāh and recitation of the Qur'ān. (Muslim)

Some Benefits of Visiting the Masājid

There are many benefits of visiting the masājid. Some of which are:

1. Expiation of Sins and Elevation of Status

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

He who purifies himself in his house (i.e. performs wuḍū) and then walks to one of the Houses of Allāh for performing an obligatory ṣalāh, one step of his will wipe out a sin and another step will raise him a level (in Paradise). (Muslim)

2. Hospitality in Jannah

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

Whoever goes to the masjid in the morning or evening, Allāh will prepare his hospitality for him in Jannah every time he leaves in the morning or evening. (Al-Bukhārī, Muslim)

3. Honour from Allāh ﷻ

Allāh ﷻ honours those servants who come to the masājid as they are His visitors. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

The one who performs wuḍū at home properly (with its sunan and ādāb) and comes to the masjid, is the visitor of Allāh. And it is the duty of the one being visited that he honours the visitor. (Aṭ-Ṭabarānī)

Similarly, Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ said, The masājid are the Houses of Allāh ﷻ upon the earth and it is a right upon the one who is visited that he honours his visitor. (Ibn Abī Shaybah)

4. Protection from Shayṭān

Sayyidunā ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Ma‘qil ؓ has said,

We would say that the masjid is a strong fort for protection from Shayṭān. (Ibn Abī Shaybah)

5. Opportunity for Practising Sunan

Furthermore, just by entering the masjid with the right foot, one would be gaining the immense reward of practising a Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. By reciting the prescribed du‘ā for entering the masjid another Sunnah would be accomplished. Similarly, upon leaving the masjid whilst reciting the prescribed du‘ā, reward of

practising another two sunan will be acquired.

6. Reward of I'tikāf

By making the intention of i'tikāf at the time of entering, the entire time spent within the masjid will bear the reward of i'tikāf as well.

7. Safety from Impermissible Actions

Besides this, one's presence in the masjid, provided one does not engage in talking about worldly matters, will save one from impermissible speech and actions, which may possibly have been carried out outside the masjid.

Let us endeavour to perform the five daily ṣalāh with congregation and obtain a place in the first row. We have plenty of time to talk and meet people outside ṣalāh times. Leave all the mundane activities for another time and come and sit as close as possible to the Imām. Shayṭān prevents us from actions that bring us closer to Allāh ﷻ. Let us fight Shayṭān and endeavour to do everything that brings us closer to Allāh ﷻ.

Intentions for going to the Masjid

There are many intentions which can be made when going to the masjid. Remember, for each intention a separate reward will be attained. Listed below are some possible intentions that can be made:

1. To perform ṣalāh.
2. To visit the House of Allāh ﷻ.
3. To hope for the Generosity of Allāh ﷻ as He is the

Most-Generous, and a generous person is hospitable to his guest.

4. To obtain reward for the time spent while awaiting the congregation.
5. To be safeguarded from sins.
6. NafI (optional) i'tikāf.
7. To remember Allāh ﷻ in seclusion.
8. To obtain the reward of ḥajj and 'umrah by performing wuḍū and going to the maṣjid for ṣalāh.
9. To meet fellow Muslims (outside of the maṣjid).
10. The reward of salām.
11. To recite the du'ā when entering and leaving the maṣjid.
12. To recite the Qur'ān.
13. *Amr bil ma'rūf* and *nahy 'anil munkar* (to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong).
14. To make muḥāṣabah of the nafs, murāqabah of the Hereafter and to seek forgiveness for one's sins.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us true love for the maṣājid; forgive our sins and overlook our shortcomings; and may He grant us the correct understanding of Dīn and His Pleasure. Āmīn.

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