

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1

The places God loves best in all lands are their mosques

2

and the ones He most dislikes are their markets. ⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿Say: 'My Lord has enjoined justice, and that you set your whole selves [to Him] at every time and place of prayer, and call on Him, sincere in your faith in Him alone. As it was He who brought you into being in the first instance, so also [to Him] you will return'.﴾ (7: 29)

﴿God's mosques may be tended only by those who believe in God and the Last Day, are constant in prayers, pay zakat (the obligatory charity) and fear none other than God. It is those who are likely to be rightly guided.﴾ (9: 18)

﴿In houses which God has sanctioned to be raised so that His name be remembered in them, there are [such as] extol His limitless glory, morning and evening (36) – people whom neither commerce nor profit can divert from the remembrance of God, and from attending regularly to prayer, and from paying their zakat; who are filled with fear of the day when all hearts and eyes will be convulsed; (37) who [only hope] that God may reward them in accordance with the best that they ever did, and lavish His grace upon them. God gives to whom He wills beyond all reckoning.﴾ (24: 36-38)

The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he used to accompany the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers among the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that the places God likes best are the mosques, where He is worshipped and often remembered. The places He dislikes most are the marketplaces, where people frequently swear false oaths and where cheating, unfairness and deception are often found.

1 Related by Muslim, 671



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) states in this hadith that the places God loves best are mosques, as they are the places of obeying God, the foundation of fearing Him, the cradle of all knowledge and the starting point of advocating the divine message.

Hence, the Prophet was keen to build his mosque in Madinah shortly after his arrival there. He himself carried the stones as did his companions.

The mosque is the first step in the establishment of a Muslim state. From it the message of Islam spreads and in it, the laws of Islam are learnt. The Prophet (peace be upon him) managed the affairs of state in the mosque, and there he discussed with his companions war plans, received emissaries and delegations, assigned tasks to his messengers and expeditions and there he judged in disputes.

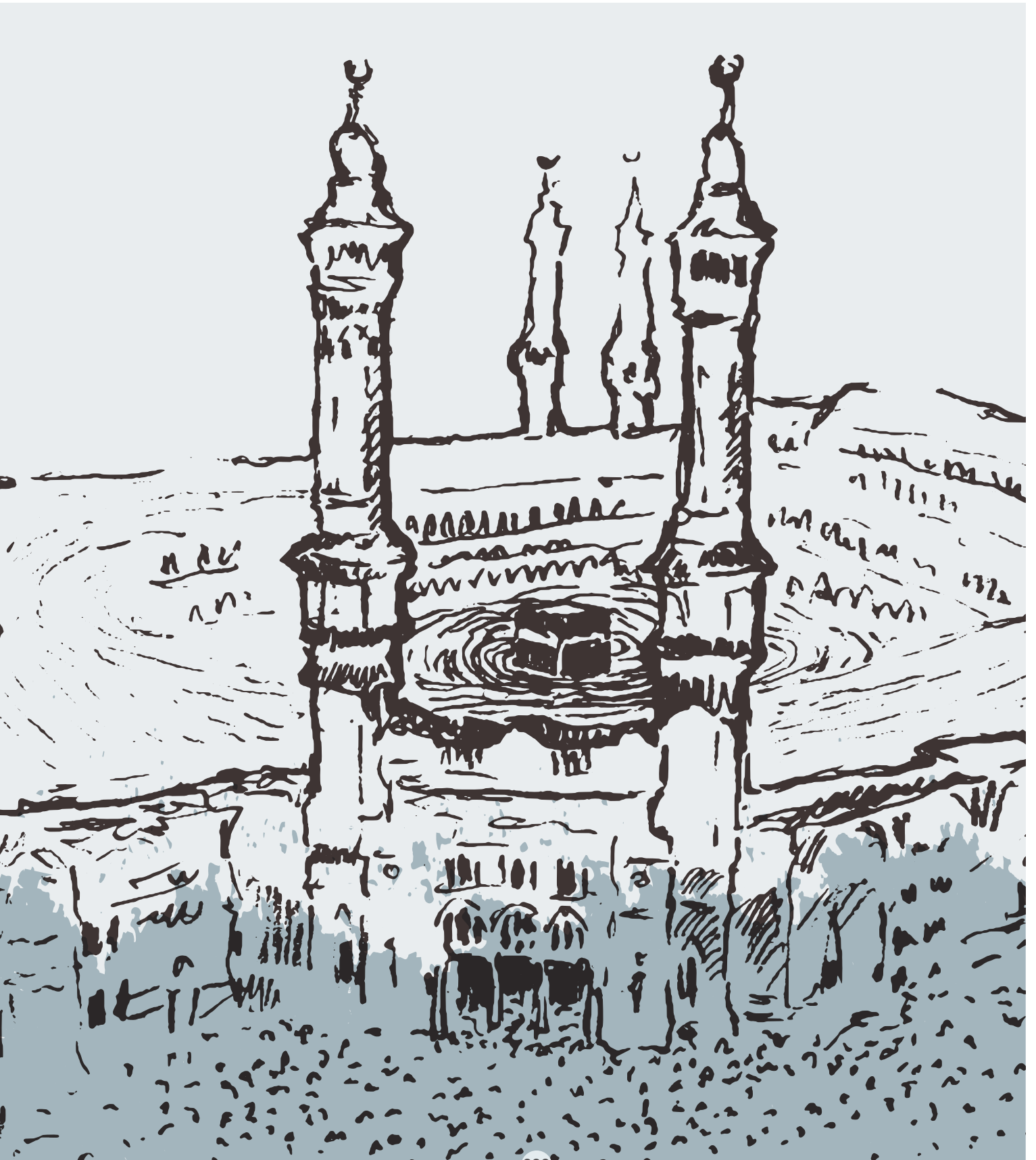
It is the people of faith who are God-fearing that frequent mosques. They are the ones God describes in His Book, saying: 'In houses which God has sanctioned to be raised so that His name be remembered in them, there are [such as] extol His limitless glory, morning and evening (36) – people whom neither commerce nor profit can divert from the remembrance of God, and from attending regularly to prayer, and from paying their zakat; who are filled with fear of the day when all hearts and eyes will be convulsed'. (24: 36-37) He also describes them as the people of faith: 'God's mosques may be tended only by those who believe in God and the Last Day, are constant in prayers, pay zakat (the obligatory charity) and fear none other than God. It is those who are likely to be rightly guided'. (9: 18)

Therefore, paying for the building and running of God's houses is the best and most rewarding of payments. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever builds a mosque, dedicating it purely for God, God will build a home for him in Heaven'.⁽¹⁾



The Prophet also mentions in this hadith that the places on earth God dislikes most are marketplaces where there is much idle talk, cheating, deception, false swearing, usurious transactions and little remembrance of God. Hence, the Prophet's companion, Salmān al-Fārisī, describes marketplaces as 'Satan's own battlefield where he raises his banner'.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 439; Muslim, 533.



Implementation

1

God's Messenger (peace be upon him) tells us that mosques are the places God loves best. As such, worship in a mosque is better than worship elsewhere. Prayer in a mosque is better than the same prayer offered at home or one's workplace. Study circles held in mosques are better than those held elsewhere. Likewise, spending one's money on mosque building is better and earns greater reward than on other good causes.

2

The essence behind the rise of the Muslim community and its progress was the very active role the mosque played in education, character building and advocacy of Islam. When this role disappeared, ignorance became common among the Muslim youth to the extent that a great number of them became totally unaware of the most essential principles and legislation of Islam. If we really want to regain our lost position in human civilisation, we need to focus on the right education of our youth and give back to the mosque its prominent role in this regard.

3

Since the mosque is the place God loves best, spending time there with the intention of worship and waiting for prayers earns good reward, which no Muslim should miss out on.

4

God ranks frequenting mosques among the best actions that draws a person closer to his Lord, Mighty and Exalted. The Prophet (peace be upon him) includes among the seven types of people God covers with His shade on the Day when there is no shade other than His 'a person whose heart is inclined towards mosques'.⁽¹⁾

5

Mosques are God's houses. Certain values and manners should be observed when visiting mosques, such as wearing decent clothes, attending to one's appearance, wearing perfume and refraining from eating anything that gives off a bad smell from the mouth, such as onions and garlic.

6

It is recommended that people say the recommended supplication on entering a mosque and on leaving it. The Prophet said: 'When any of you enters a mosque, let him say: "My Lord, open for me the gates of Your mercy", and when he leaves, let him say: "My Lord, I pray to You to grant me of Your bounty"'.⁽²⁾

7

It is recommended that on entering a mosque, a person does not sit down until he has offered a prayer of two *rak'ahs* as a greeting to the mosque. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'When any of you enters the mosque, let him not sit down until he has offered two *rak'ahs*'.⁽³⁾

8

Marketplaces are the worst places because of the many sins committed there including futile arguments and aggression. Any place that has the same characteristics shares the same verdict. If false swearing, cursing, verbal abuse and insults are said frequently at a person's home or workplace, then it is one of the worst places in God's view.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 660; Muslim, 1031.

2 Related by Muslim, 713.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 444; Muslim, 714.

9

It is discouraged for a Muslim to frequent a marketplace for no purpose. If he goes there to buy or sell or do some other needful thing, then he may go without being discouraged. God says in the Qur'an: 'Even before you, We never sent messengers other than [men] who indeed ate food and went about in the market-places'. (25: 20)

10

Whoever needs to go to a marketplace should try not to be the first to enter nor the last to leave. This is to act on Salmān al-Fārisī's advice: 'If you can, do not be the first to enter the marketplace, nor the last to leave. It is Satan's battlefield where he lifts his banner'.⁽¹⁾



1 Related by Muslim, 2451.

