

# **Role of Masjid and Imam**

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# Role of Masjid and Imam

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# Role of Masjid and Imam

Masjid is the Arabic for a Mosque and is the place where five times prayers are conducted every day. Masjid however, is not just a place of worship but is meant to play an important and active part in offering all forms of services for social and religious needs of the community.

Imam means a leader of the community or someone who is looked up to as a role model and is followed by others. Imam is not limited to leading the prayer from an Islamic perspective, although most people new to Islam may get that impression.

The masjid provides a centre and focus for all activities of the Muslim community. As for the purpose of a masjid the Quran points towards the first ever such centre and its purpose in the following verse:

*“Indeed the first House (of Prayer) established for mankind is the one at Bakkah (Makkah): it is full of blessing and a centre of guidance for the whole world. In it there are clear signs and the station of Abraham; whoever enters it becomes secure.” (3:96-97)*

Every masjid in the world has the same purpose of being a source of guidance, benefits and peace for all those who enter it.

A mosque has to be welcoming towards the community regardless of their faith and belief and provide guidance and be a source of inner peace through spiritual upliftment of human hearts.

# What Is a Masjid?

The Quran establishes the principle of Masjids being the places that belong to God Almighty exclusively therefore they are available for all mankind and that none should be associated with God in His divinity.

*“And that “mosques belong to Allah, so do not invoke anyone with Him” (72:18)*

The importance of Masjids to Muslims all over the world reflects the universal message of brotherhood in Islam as all can stand, shoulder to shoulder, feet to feet, to perform their prayer irrespective of colour, race or wealth. From an Islamic perspective all activities that encourage good and virtue are to be conducted within the premises of a masjid.

The Prophet (pbuh) used to use mosques as a means of Dawah (inviting people to Islam), and this continues to be the case today. The Prophet (pbuh) never stopped any non-Muslim coming in. He always welcomed them very openly and even encouraged them to come in and he encouraged the Muslims to bring them to the mosque so that they can get first hand information and an eye witness account of the message of Islam. Some mosques even have burial arrangements and facilities to wash and prepare the deceased for the afterlife in the Islamic way.

The importance of a centre in the form of a masjid can be gauged by the fact that when Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) migrated from Makkah to Madinah, the first and immediate task relating to his community building mission was constructing the city’s principal mosque. Every other undertaking, including building houses for the migrants; a majority of whom were poor and practically homeless, had to be deferred till after the Prophet’s Mosque was completed.

When completed, the form of the Prophet's Mosque was extremely simple. Its unpretentious form notwithstanding, the Mosque since its inception served as a genuine community development centre, quickly evolving into a multifunctional complex. The Mosque was meant not only for performing prayers at formally appointed times, but also for many other religious, social, political, administrative and cultural functions. It became a catalyst and standard-setter for civilization-building undertakings across the Muslim territories.

Islam is not a religion in its restricted meaning but is a complete way of life and the notion of the mosque as a community centre, is inseparable. They originate from each other, needing one another for their proper functioning and continued existence. The mosque is as old as man on earth, because the truth (Islam) is also as old. The life of a believer cannot be imagined without the mosque institution which as a community centre should always occupy as much as possible the central and most strategic locations in villages, neighbourhoods, towns and cities.

The mosque should always contain as many purposeful and serviceable components and facilities as possible so as to function as a vibrant and effective community centre. Indeed, good mosques are accessible, pleasant and friendly. They are cost-effective, environment friendly and sustainable. They provide a wide range of activities, benefits and services to their users so that they become resourceful, relevant, lively, valuable and alluring to both men and women, the young and old, the rich and poor, the busy and idle, and to the exemplary as well as nominal Muslims.

These and other similar truths are to be remembered and painstakingly observed during the processes of planning, designing, building and using mosques in every time and place. In short, mosques are to be living invaluable realities. At every tier of their conceptual and physical existence, they ought to "live" and embody the dynamism, pragmatism, universalism, intransience and splendour

of the Islamic message. They should be the Muslim community's greatest asset.

## **Masjid in Prophet's Time**

During the Prophet's era the main functions performed by the Mosque revolved around being a centre for individual and congregational worship practices, a learning centre, the seat of the Prophet's government, a welfare and charity centre, a detention and rehabilitation centre, a place for medical treatment and nursing, and a place for some leisure activities. The Prophet's Mosque was the nerve-centre of the wide spectrum of the community's activities. It was also a centre of gravity for the civilizational aspirations of the fast-emerging Muslim community (Ummah). The impact of the Mosque complex on the development of Madinah was such that the core of the city eventually grew to be almost ring-shaped, centring on the complex. Thus, the standard was set for all future Muslim cities in terms of the status and role of their principal mosques.

Prior to the migration of Prophet (pbuh) from Makkah to Madinah, its population was made up mainly of Arabs and Jews, the former being divided into the Aws and Khazraj tribes and the latter into Banu Qaynuqa', Banu al-Nadir and Banu Qurayzah tribes.

However, after the arrival of the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions from Makkah (muhajirs or migrants), as well as after the conversion of many a Madinah citizen to Islam, the city's demographic landscape was set to change forever. The first stage of such a drastic transformation hit the road as early as during the instant building of the principal (the Prophet's) Mosque — ahead of anything else — which at once assumed the role of the centre of gravity in the affairs and developments instigated and flavoured by the aspirations and goals of the new community. The city's name was expectedly altered

in the process. The name adopted for the model Islamic city was Madinah (meaning simply “the City”), derived from the Arabic words maddana and tamaddun, which mean to civilize (urbanize) and civilization respectively. In its capacity as the prototype Islamic city, the urban fabric, spatial arrangements and functions of Madinah were emulated for centuries by Muslims all over their vast territories.

The first urban element introduced by the Prophet (pbuh) to the city of Madinah was the mosque institution which functioned as a community development centre. While in Makkah, the Prophet (pbuh) and his followers were denied the existence and free utilization of their mosques, although they were in dire need of them. As a result, they were denied a free and proper practice of their new Islamic faith, and so, were robbed of some of their basic human rights. They were denied the freedom of thought, expression and practice of their beliefs.

However, in order to offset partially this deficiency in Makkah, the first Muslims were utilizing some Muslim houses, or some quiet, secret and safe spots mainly on the outskirts of Makkah, to serve the purpose on an interim basis. They even got accustomed to going and visiting the Kabah or al-Masjid al-Haram, albeit without openly and freely performing their religious duties there. Al-Masjid al-Haram was then controlled by polytheists and polytheistic ideas and customs, both from inside the city of Makkah and from abroad. This way, only as much as symbolically could al-Masjid al-Haram function as a mosque, as well as a nucleus, in the lives of the nascent believing Muslim community. Such a state of affairs continued for about 13 years following which God brought about a change and granted the Muslims and their Prophet (pbuh) that which they had been yearning for. They managed to migrate to Madinah where all the necessary conditions for establishing a well-structured, thriving, free and autonomous state existed.

## **Building Masjids by Prophet pbuh**

To what extent the mosque institution was desirable both to propel the struggle for the Islamic cause to a higher level, and to spur and facilitate the overall progress of the Muslims and their young community, testifies the following event.

On the way from Makkah to Madinah, the Prophet (pbuh) rested four — or fourteen, or eighteen, or twenty two days (Ibn Kathir, 1985, vol. 3 p. 196) — in Quba, a suburb of Madinah about two to three miles to the southeast of the city, whence he proceeded to his final destination, the city of Madinah proper. Even though his stay in Quba accounted for a short interval under some totally new circumstances which everyone was craving for, the Prophet (pbuh) succeeded in establishing a mosque there, “the Mosque of Piety”, to which he later during his subsequent stay in Madinah frequently came, riding or walking.

The Quba’ Mosque was the first mosque built by the Prophet (pbuh). Thus, it occupies a special place in the Islamic tradition. The Prophet (pbuh) once said:

*“He who purifies himself at home and then proceeds to the Quba’ Mosque for a prayer will procure the reward of the ‘umrah (the lesser pilgrimage).”* (Ibn Majah, 2008, Hadith No. 1402)

Certainly, it was because of this that the Qur’an referred to the Quba’ Mosque as “the Mosque of Piety”. The Prophet (pbuh) loved to go and visit it.

That building and making the most of mosques was a matter of great urgency to the Prophet (pbuh) has been highlighted once again prior to the Prophet’s arrival into the city of Madinah proper. It was Friday when the Prophet (pbuh) set off from Quba’ to Madinah. On the way, before he arrived, the time for the Jummah (Friday) Prayer drew near. Being used to offering prayers wherever their appointed times

overtook him, even if he happened to be in a sheepfold, the Prophet (pbuh) performed the Jummah Prayer with the tribe of Banu Salim b. ‘Uwq because he happened to pass right through their quarter at the time of the Prayer.

They prayed most probably at a plain that functioned as a makeshift mosque of the Banu Salim b. ‘Uwq tribe. That was the Prophet’s first Jummah Prayer in Madinah. The number of worshipers was about one hundred; some estimated that it was about forty (*Samahudi, 1997, vol. 1 p. 258*).

When Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) arrived in Madinah from Makkah, the first and immediate task relating to the built environment, as well as to the community building process, that he embarked on fulfilling was building the city’s central mosque, also called the Prophet’s mosque (al-Masjid al-Nabawi). Every other undertaking, including building houses for the migrants (muhajirs) who were practically homeless, had to be put off till after the Prophet’s mosque was completed. Herein, too, lays a clue as to the extreme importance of the mosque and the profundity of its message in Islam.

When the migrants arrived in Madinah, almost all of them were indigent and virtually homeless. At the same time, the aspiring community had no mosques or any other social institutions.

## **The Main Functions of the Mosque/Imam**

As mentioned earlier, the Prophet’s Mosque, in its capacity as a community development centre, performed numerous religious and social roles and functions. The Mosque thus was a centre for religious activities; a learning centre; the seat of the Prophet’s government; a welfare and charity centre; a detention and rehabilitation centre; a place for medical treatment and nursing; a place for some leisure activities. Each of these functions will be

discussed next. The most important aspect to keep in mind is that Prophet pbuh was the Imam and therefore the primary driving force behind the fulfilment of all these services provided through the masjid. The role of Imam therefore is to lead, facilitate, build capacity, be part of the services and make sure that the masjid is run in accordance with these roles and responsibilities. It's the Imam who is primarily responsible for making the masjid the epicentre and hub of all community activity. Needless to say, if the Imam is not capable enough the services rendered by such a centre would accordingly be handicapped!

### **1) The Mosque as a centre for religious activities**

The Prophet's Mosque was a place where the Muslims offered in congregation their five daily prayers. Other available mosques in Madinah served the similar purpose, but the Jummah Prayer was conducted in the Prophet's Mosque only. The Prophet (pbuh) in many of his sayings (hadith) encouraged the people to frequent and patronize mosques, promising abundant rewards for those who establish and keep up that habit.

He, for instance, said that a prayer offered in congregation is twenty five, or twenty seven, times more superior in reward to that which is offered alone (al-Bukhari, 1981, Hadith No. 466); that those who walk to mosques in darkness are given good tidings that they will have a perfect light on the Day of Judgment (*Bukhari, 1981, Hadith No. 561*).

If women ask permission to go to the mosque at night, they are to be allowed (in principle, women are not obliged to pray in mosques) (al-Bukhari, 1981, Hadith No. 824); that those whose hearts are attached to mosques are promised God's shade on the Day of Judgment when there will be no shade but His, etc (*Bukhari, 1981, Hadith*)

Apart from the prayers, the Prophet's Mosque accommodated many more religious activities which could be performed both individually and collectively, such as reciting and studying the Qur'an, dhikr (remembering and glorifying God), i'tikaf (retreat in mosques during the last third of the holy month of Ramadan for worship), meditation (tafakkur), etc.

## **2) The Mosque as a learning centre**

The Prophet's Mosque was the first and undeniably most outstanding Islamic centre of learning. There under the Prophet's vigilant eye studied the generation, both men and women, young and old, rich and poor, literate and illiterate!

Acquiring and transmitting knowledge are among the noblest and most rewarding activities that man can do in this terrestrial life. In Islam, learning means understanding and recognizing God as the Creator and Sovereign of the cosmos and man, recognizing man as the vicegerent of God and understanding his behaviour and society, and understanding, as well as appreciating, the natural world so that a peaceful and accountable relationship with it could be fostered. For Muslims, therefore, living means learning, and learning means worshipping. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali captured this inimitable Islamic spirit of learning when he asserted that man "was created only to know (learn)" (*Wan Daud, 1989, p. 62*).

The Prophet (pbuh) once said: "If anyone travels on a road in search of knowledge, Allah will cause him to travel on one of the roads of Paradise. The angels will lower their wings in their great pleasure with one who seeks knowledge, the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth and the fish in the deep waters will ask forgiveness for the learned man. The superiority of the learned man over the devout is like that of the moon, on the night when it is full, over the rest of the stars. The learned are the heirs of the Prophets and the Prophets leave

neither dinar nor dirham, they leave only knowledge, and he who takes it takes an abundant portion” (*Abu Dawud, 1997, Hadith No. 36340*).

Allah says in the Qur’an:

*“Those truly fear God, among His servants, who have knowledge”* (Fatir, 28).

Since at first there were no schools as such, it was natural that mosques became the first Islamic learning centres accessible to all, with the Prophet’s Mosque standing out as a dynamic standard setter. While encouraging the people to make use of mosques for the said purpose, the Prophet (pbuh) revealed: “...

He who treads the path in search of knowledge, God will make with it the path which leads to Jannah (Paradise) easy for him. And those persons who assemble in a house of God’s Houses (mosques) and recite the Qur’an, learning and teaching it among themselves, there would descend upon them the tranquillity, and mercy would cover them, and the angels would surround them, and God makes a mention of them in the presence of those near Him” (*Muslim, 2005, Hadith No. 6518*).

In each masjid you would find this teaching and learning tradition continuing till date-from toddlers to elderly- all carrying on this brilliant tradition of teaching and learning thus passing on the knowledge to the younger generations, generation after generation!

That’s why the Prophet’s Mosque was always bustling with life. Study circles over which the Prophet (pbuh) often presided, intellectual discourses, meditation, devotion to learning on an individual basis, etc., made the Mosque virtually never devoid of people. Neither women, nor children were overlooked in the process.

The Prophet (pbuh) allocated some time during every week for teaching exclusively women, since they had their own subjects and issues which they wanted very much to bring up and gain knowledge of, but in a comfortable and conducive atmosphere away from men.

Aisha, the Prophet's wife, once remarked about the native women of Madinah:

*“Blessed are the women of the Ansar (helpers). Shyness did not stand in their way of seeking knowledge about their Deen (Way of life)” (Muslim, 2005, Hadith No. 649)*

Every kind of beneficial knowledge was pursued and cultivated — in keeping with the existing epistemological standards, of course. Poetry, in which many companions excelled and which was primarily used for propagating the Islamic cause, was no exception. A companion Hassan b. Thabit was one of the most outstanding poets. He used to recite poetry inside the Mosque of the Prophet (pbuh) and in the presence of the Prophet (pbuh)

### **3) The Mosque as the seat of the Prophet's government**

The Mosque of the Prophet (pbuh) played the role of the seat of the first Islamic government. In the Mosque, the Prophet (pbuh) used to spend long hours on a daily basis discussing, deciding and executing many affairs related to administering the state. As he was the head of the Madinah government and the leader of the state, it was only appropriate for the Prophet's houses to be built in the closest proximity to his Mosque. Thus, against the outer side of the eastern wall of the Mosque, the houses for the Prophet (pbuh) and his household were built. The eastern wall of the Mosque was integrated into the configurations of the houses serving as their western wall. The doors of the houses opened into the Mosque proper. In total, there were nine houses.

The location of the Prophet's houses (his official residences) vis-à-vis his Mosque implied convenience, accessibility, transparency and responsibility towards the people. Otherwise stated, it implied all the

qualities needed for an excellent, competent, accountable and people-friendly government.

In his Mosque, the Prophet (pbuh) received foreign dignitaries. A tent was set up in the Mosque where from time to time some of the Prophet's guests would stay. Some guests would stay even in the suffah (a section in the Mosque meant for the lodging of the poorest people in Madinah). However, more often than not, most of his guests would stay in some lofty houses that belonged to some companions, and which had been earlier appointed for the purpose (*Kattani, 1980, vol. 1 p. 445-450*).

When receiving foreign delegations, the Prophet (pbuh) used to put on the most beautiful apparel he had. He would furthermore ask his nearest companions to do the same.

Some of the Prophet's guests were non-Muslims, or recent converts. As such, receiving them and making them stay in the Mosque could soften their hearts, or could change for the better their stance on Islam and Muslims. The Mosque thus was a centre for promoting mutual understanding, tolerance and unity.

It was the first active centre in history for interfaith dialogue and cooperation. When a Christian delegation from Najran, a city in south-western Arabian Peninsula, visited the Prophet (pbuh), he met them nowhere else but in the shades of his Mosque. Their number was 60. They were led by a group of their priests. When the time of one of their prayers was due, they were allowed to pray right inside the Mosque.

In addition, since many Jews were residents of Madinah, their constant interactions with the Prophet (pbuh) and the Muslims at all levels of their mutual existence, are well-documented. During the

above mentioned visit by the Christians from Najran, a group of Jewish rabbis from Madinah likewise joined them and their discussion (debate) with the Prophet (pbuh) (*Sabuni, 1981, vol. 1 p. 108*).

Such was truly an awesome sight, a dialogue between three Abrahamic monotheistic faiths and between some of their highest representatives, which was hosted by the Prophet (pbuh) inside his Mosque, one of the holiest places in Islam. This particular role of the Prophet's Mosque was a cause for revealing this Quranic verse:

*“Say: ‘O People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Come to an agreement between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God.’ And if they turn away, then say: ‘Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him)’ (3: 64).*

God also says, instructing Muslims as the initiators and major stakeholders in interfaith dialogues, especially with Jews and Christians:

*“And do not dispute with the People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) except by what is best, except those of them who act unjustly, and say: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him do we submit” (al-‘Ankabut, 46).*

The Mosque every so often also served as a revenue distribution centre. When some goods collected in Bahrain as land tax came to the Prophet (pbuh) — the biggest amount ever received during the Prophet's time — he gathered the people in his Mosque where everything till the last coin was fairly distributed (*Bukhari, 1981, Hadith No. 413*).

The Prophet (pbuh) acted in his Mosque as a judge, too. However, the execution of sentences took place outside the Mosque proper.

#### **4) The Mosque as a welfare and charity centre**

The Prophet's Mosque also served as a welfare and charity centre. There, the poorest companions of the community resided. A shaded structure called suffah (a raised platform or bench) was erected for them in a corner of the northern side of the Mosque. Those people were called ahl al-suffah or the "People of the suffah". Most of the suffah dwellers were from Makkah migrants with no wealth of their own. There were actually two suffahs: one for men and the other for women, the former seemingly outnumbering the latter. It may be due to the number of its tenants and its corresponding status and position in the Mosque proper, that the suffah for women was always less known and less frequently referred to. And whenever it is brought up, that is usually done in an indirect manner, such as the companion Abdullah b. 'Umar's statement that the Prophet (pbuh) punished a thief for stealing a shield from the women's suffah (*Nasa'i, 1956, Hadith No. 4825*).

Like their counterparts in the male suffah, the women in the female suffah did not sit idle either. Several activities for their own wellbeing and for the wellbeing of the whole community kept them very busy.

Finally, there was also a tent in the Prophet's Mosque, or a small room with low roof, set up for an African girl who was a slave belonging to an Arab tribe. She was unjustly accused of stealing a red leather scarf decorated with precious stone. But after the truth had surfaced, she came to the Prophet (pbuh) as quickly as she could manage and embraced Islam. She stayed in the Prophet's Mosque in

her tent, regularly calling on Aisha, the Prophet's wife, and talking to her (*Bukhari, 1981, Hadith no 430*).

### **5) The Mosque as a detention and rehabilitation centre**

The Prophet's Mosque partly functioned as a detention and rehabilitation centre, too. However, many aspects of this role remained shrouded in a number of ambiguities. Not only were some male captives kept in what can be dubbed as the Mosque's detention centre, but also the female ones. For the latter, an enclosed space near one of the Mosque's entrances was allocated (*Kattani, 1980, vol p.299*).

The benefits of having a detention centre within the Mosque's realm were two-fold: it ensured the safety and fair treatment of internees — generally war prisoners; and secondly, it helped them come slowly and via some hands-on experience to terms with what Islam and the Muslims were all about and what they really stood for, taking into account the Mosque's both religious and social significance and functions. This resulted in many a detainee to be won over by the life and demeanour of the Muslims, and to eventually accept Islam.

In other words, the place was not a detention centre per se. Rather; it was a spiritual and psychological rehabilitation centre, as a detention centre should be!

### **6) The Mosque as a place for medical treatment and nursing**

In the Prophet's Mosque, there was occasionally a place reserved for medical treatment and nursing as well. A tent or more at times were erected for the purpose. On the day of the battle of the Ditch (al-khandaq), a companion Sa'd b. Mu'adh was injured and the Prophet (pbuh) pitched a tent in his Mosque so that he could be looked after properly. Besides, the Prophet (pbuh) wanted to be near his friend

and close companion so as to visit him on a regular basis and monitor his condition.

A woman called Rufaydah was perhaps most well-known of those who were nursing the sick and wounded (*Kattani, 1980, vol. 1 p. 454*).

Some women used to accompany Muslim armies to battlefields in order to look after the ailing and wounded soldiers. Returning to Madinah, some people with serious wounds still needed continual and more intensive healing procedures. In view of the quantity and regularity of the combats which the early Muslims had to undertake, the number of the wounded was quite substantial at all times and the masjid played a pivotal role in their treatment.

## **7) The Mosque as a place for some leisure activities**

The Mosque of the Prophet (pbuh) was a place where some sport and recreation activities were occasionally held, both inside and outside it. Aisha, the Prophet's wife, narrated that once during an 'Eid festival, she saw the Prophet (pbuh) at the door of their house watching some Ethiopians who were playing in the Mosque proper displaying their skill with spears, whereupon she joined him (*Bukhari, 1981, Hadith No. 445*). The same or another group 'Umar b. al-Khattab once scolded, but the Prophet (pbuh) asked him to leave them alone. And to them he said that they were safe and should carry on (*Bukhari, 1981, Hadith No. 103*).

Also, immediately after the sunset prayer (maghrib), some companions of the Prophet (pbuh) would sometimes practice archery inside the Mosque in the Prophet's presence till the full darkness descended and the targets were no longer visible (*Bukhari, 1981, Hadith No. 534*).

When the Prophet (pbuh) married one of his wives, the mother of a companion Anas b. Malik prepared some food and sent it to the Prophet (pbuh). The number of the Prophet's guests was about three hundred all of whom had come upon invitation. As most of them could not enter the Prophet's house, which adjoined the Mosque, the people stayed inside the Mosque, in the suffah, waiting for their turn to go into the house and eat (*Muslim, 2005, Hadith No. 2572*).

Some people used to spend even their free time in the Mosque, knowing that there will always be somebody there to talk to, to listen to, to teach or learn something new from, etc. There was always something beneficial going on there. Even the Prophet (pbuh) used to spend some of his scarce free time in the Mosque, enjoying some light moments with his companions, making them smile and smiling himself at whatever they might have been talking about, like some amusing tales from the pre-Islamic Jahilyyah period.

This particular sentiment was quite effortlessly sustained because of the fact that the community was rapidly expanding, its ideology reaching new horizons, and revelation (wahy) constantly coming down to guide the people, and spur as well as facilitate their spiritual and civilizational growth. The mood often morphed into excitement, curiosity, hope and a sense of responsibility.

Many people tried everything possible to stay in permanent touch with whatever was transpiring in the Mosque. Missing out on practically anything was regarded as a serious loss, as there was nothing of what was taking place there that was trivial or vain. The people, by and large, aimed to identify and take in what was affecting them, outlining then a scope of their immediate and

subsequent participations in, as well as contributions to, those events and experiences.

Some people even saw the Prophet (pbuh) lying flat (on his back) in the Mosque with one leg on the other. Caliphs; Umar and Uthman used to do the same! (*Bukhari, 1981, Hadith No. 464*).

Truly, the air of the Prophet's Mosque, and the air of Madinah in general, was always permeated with confidence, optimism, vitality and exhilaration. One was able to sense this compelling aura as soon as one approached the city and its principal Mosque. Since it is people who give cities and their built environments a meaning and life, the people of Madinah, too, were solely responsible for this fascinating atmosphere in their city. They generated it, soaked it up, and then, exuded it back to whatever and whoever came within the spheres of their religious and worldly influence. Indeed, the Prophet's Mosque and the city of Madinah at large were such wonderful and inspiring places bent on making the whole world a better place.

As a final point, the Prophet (pbuh) explicitly prohibited conducting trade within his Mosque, and other mosques (*Abu Dawud, 1997, Hadith No. 1074*), but he did not prohibit it outside the Mosque (*Bukhari, 1981, Hadith No. 782*). Several instances of trading activities on a very limited scale outside the Mosque during the Prophet's era have been reported.

On account of this, certain markets and even industries abutting the mosques — specifically such as were with tolerable visual, sound; aromatic and crowd-oriented consequences for everyday city-life — became soon introduced to the morphology of Islamic cities. Other markets and industries, some of which were bound to cause some serious disruption or nuisance to either individuals or institutions, remained customarily situated on the cities' peripheries.

The extent of their remoteness from the cities' principal mosques and the residential areas surrounding them varied depending on a number of issues, such as the geography of settlements, the compactness of residential areas and the availability of space, the vitality and functions of the mosque complexes, the dynamism and richness of market activities, the overall socio-political and economic conditions of cities, etc.

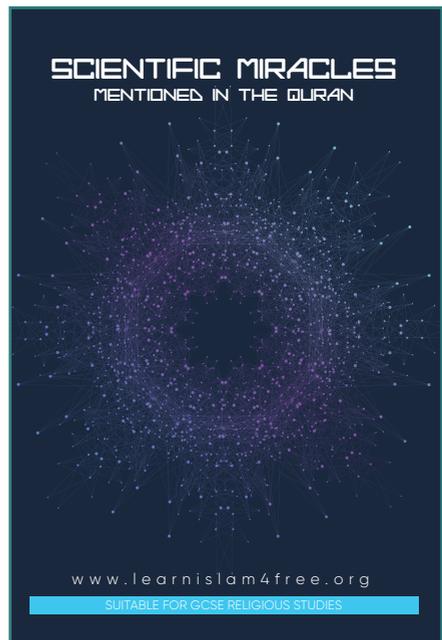
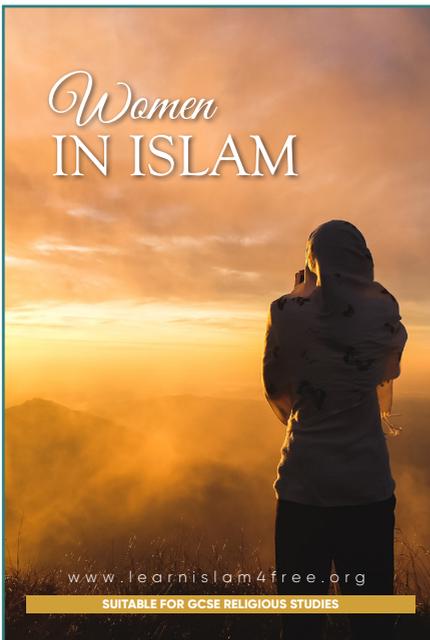
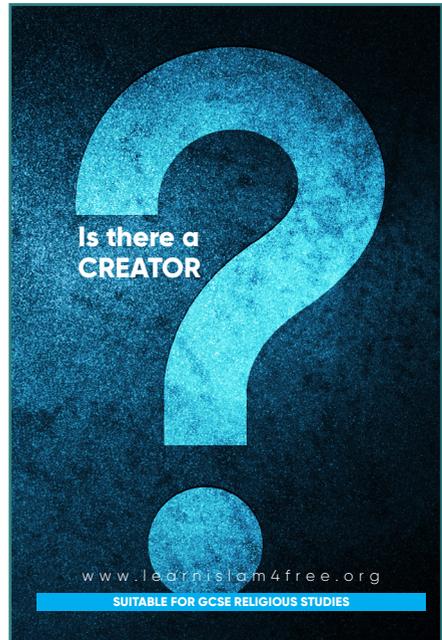
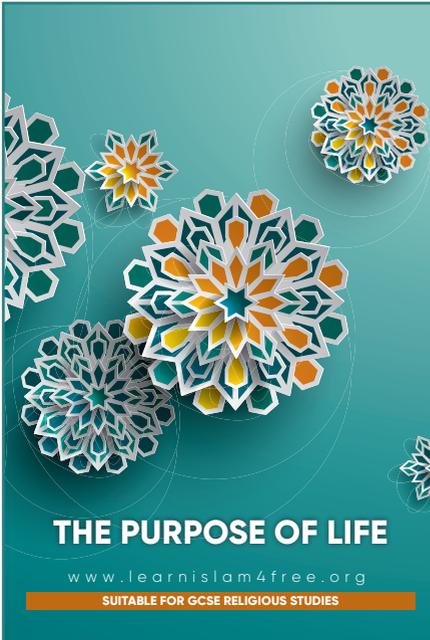
The Qualities of those who are to lead and manage the Masjids i.e. its management and the Imams has been summed up in the following verse of the Quran:

*“The mosques of God shall be maintained by such as believe in God and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, and practise regular charity, and fear none (at all) except God. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance”. (9:18)*

The roles described above are the ones that a masjid and the Imam of the masjid is expected to play in the light of how Prophet pbuh showed his leadership as the first Imam or leader of the Muslim community. It is clearly evident from the discussion and details mentioned in this booklet that the role of a masjid is far more comprehensive than just a place of worship and the role of an Imam is more wide ranging than merely leading the prayer inside of the masjid!

In a nutshell the Masjids should be the “one stop shops” for the comprehensive needs of the community and its Imams should be the dynamic and innovative leaders of the community providing solutions to the problems faced by their respective communities!

## OTHER ESSENTIAL READINGS



## Booklets

1. The Quran
2. The Book That Shook The World
3. World's First Written Constitution
4. The Sharia Law
5. The Purpose Of Life
6. The People Of The Book
7. What Is Islam?
8. The Concept Of God In Islam
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44. Islam For Children
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