Rules for the Masjid (Mosque)

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Article

Brief Presentation of Az-Zahra Islamic Centre

Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre is a multipurpose complex consisting of a Mosque, Imamabargha, Gymnasium, Ghusl Rooms, Seniors' Rooms, Nursery and Children's Rooms, Offices as well as Madrasah and Elementary School. This 55,000 sq. ft. facility, built at a cost of about Cdn. $12 million, meets the needs, present and future, of Muslim community that is growing, dynamic and visionary.

The conception, planning, development and building of the Centre took ten long years and involved untiring dedication of many members of the Shia Muslim Community of British Columbia and in particular the members of Multipurpose Complex Taskforce. Through the Grace of Allah (swt) and generosity of donors locally and worldwide, the entire cost of building of the centre is now fully paid up!

The Centre has been named after the great lady Sayyida Fatimah az-Zahraa (sa), the beloved daughter of Prophet Muhammad (S). Zahraa means radiant. It is the hope of the community leaders and visionaries that the teachings, practices and values of Islam as taught in the Holy Qur'an and illustrated by the Holy Prophet (S) and his Ahlul Bayt (as) would brightly beam from this Centre for many years to come.

Each and every structure at Az-Zahraa Islamic Centre is unique, but Masjid Az-Zahraa stands out as the most aesthetic piece of architecture. The beautiful mosque built in Islamic tradition and architecture has a green dome similar to the Prophet's mosque in Medina, two minarets based on Imam Ali al-Ridha's (as) mausoleum in Mashhad and Islamic Moorish design on the outside of the Mihrab. The internal of the Mihrab keeps the attention of the worshippers focused to the Almighty on account of relevant Qur'anic verses and calligraphy that manifests Divine unity.

On the day of Eid al-Fitr 1425 (November 14, 2004) the mosque with a ground floor of 5,000 sq. ft. and mezzanine floor of 2,500 sq. ft. accommodated over 1000 worshippers. It was truly an amazing scene to see mu'mineen from various background and ethnicity standing shoulder to shoulder and praying in unison *Allahu Akbar* (God is the Greatest). In addition to wide stairs, the mezzanine floor can be accessed through a small elevator for the elderly and handicapped. A small room at the back of the mezzanine accommodates mothers with small children.

The tall paneled entrance doors, the wide and spacious foyers and corridors with sitting benches make the facility all the more welcoming and pleasant. It has come in *Hadith* that it is recommended to have *wudhu* (ablution) place at the entrance of a mosque. Masjid Az-Zahraa has two Wudhu facilities at the entrance of gents and ladies that can cater over 20 people at a time.

The inside of the dome with 12 arched windows signifying our Ithna Ashari (Twelver) faith are decorated with Islamic calligraphy that is simply superb and glowing. The panel of the 12 stained windows beautifully designed contains the names of fourteen Ma'sumeen. The word *Allah Jalla Jalaalahu* (God, Sublime is His Majesty) is repeated throughout the inside top end of the dome. The internal base of the dome has ninety nine beautiful names of Allah, all decorated but easy to read. The fourteen

windowpanes of the mosque also contains the names and titles of the infalliable 14 Ma`sumeen (as).

A small portion of the mosque has been separated from the main section, enabling it to remain open 24 hours a day for the convenience of travelers, visitors and other mu'mineen that cannot make it to the regular scheduled congregation prayers.

Masjid (mosque) etiquette and rules

Almighty Allah (swt) says in the Holy Qur'an:

> إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۖ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ

"Only those shall maintain Allah's mosques, who believe in Allah and Last Day, and establish prayer and give zakat, and fear no one except Allah. They, hopefully, will be among the guided." (***9:18***)

Only Muslims can enter the mosque. Mu'minin are requested to ensure that all cleaning, repairs and maintenance inside the mosque be done by Muslims only. When inviting non-Muslims to the Centre for marriage and funeral ceremonies or during any other occasion, care should be taken to accommodate them outside the mosque such as in the Imambargha, adjacent rooms and foyers.

Why should we visit mosques often?

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has advised:

> عَلَيْكُمْ بِإِتْيَانِ الْمَسَاجِدِ فَإِنَّهَا بُيُوتَ اللَّهِ فِي الأَرْضِ.

"You are advised to visit mosques (often) for these are God's houses on the earth."

Benefits of saying congregation prayers in mosques

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) said that the Noble Prophet (S) has said:

> وَمَنْ مَشى إِلى مَسْجِدٍ يَطْلُبُ فِيهِ الْجَمَاعَةَ كَانَ لَهُ بِكُلّ خُطْوَةٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ حَسَنَةٍ، وَيَرْفَعُ لَهُ مِنَ الدَّرَجَاتِ مِثْلُ ذٰلِكَ، فَإِنْ مَاتَ وَهُوَ عَلى ذٰلِكَ وَكَلَ اللّٰهُ بِهِ سَبْعِينَ أَلْفِ مَلَكٍ يَعُوْدُونَهُ فِي قَبْرِهِ، وَيُبَشّرُوْنَهُ وَيُؤَنّسُونَهُ، فِي وَحْدَتِهِ، وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لَهُ حَتّى يُبْعَثَ.

"He who walks to the mosque seeking the congregational (prayers), for every step he takes he receives seventy thousand good deeds, and his rank is raised accordingly. This status continues even after his

death, for Allah appoints seventy thousand angels who would pray for him in his grave, give him good tidings, accompany him in his loneliness and plead for forgiveness for him till he his raised (from the grave)."

Preparing to leave for the mosque

1. When leaving your home, work or business, go toward the mosque with eagerness and enthusiasm for you would be meeting fellow believers who have come to worship Allah.

2. Demonstrate your eagerness by wearing perfumed, good and neat clothes.

3. Ensure that your body and clothes are all pure and clean (tahir/pak). Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) says: "One who goes to the mosque with (physical & spiritual) purity, Allah purifies this person from sins and includes him/her from the pilgrims of the mosque."

4. Do not carry any unclean & impure items (najasat) in your pockets to the mosque.

5. If you have eaten garlic, onions, etc... do not go to the mosque, until the odor from your mouth has vanished.

6. It is forbidden for the one who is in the state of janabat and haydh to enter the mosque. Only after having performed the required ghusl (major ablution) can such a person enter the mosque. Sisters who are in the state istihadha can enter the mosque for prayers or otherwise. (For detailed rules on these please refer to books on Islamic Laws)

Entering the Center and then heading towards the mosque

1. At the first entrance of the Center, you would find the following verses from the Holy Qur'an. Read these with understanding and enter the precincts under Divine safety:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ. أُدْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ آمِنِينَ، فَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ حَافِظًا وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

"Bismilaahir Rahmaanir Raheem. Udkhuloohaa bi-salaamin aaminin; fallaahu khayrun haafizaa, wa-huwa arhamur raahimeen."

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Enter it with peace and safety; for Allah is the best of protectors and the most merciful of the merciful ones." (***Holy Qur'an 15:46*** **&** ***12:64***)

2. Use the right foot to enter the Center, reciting the following Du'a:

أَللّٰهُمَّ افْتَحْ لَنَا بَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ وَ اجْعَلْنَا مِنْ عُمَّارِ مَسَاجِدِكَ، جَلَّ ثَنَاءُ وَجْهِكَ.

“Allaahumma'ftah lanaa baaba rahmatika waj`alnaa min 'ammari masaajidika, jalla thanaa'u wajhik.”

”O Allah, open for us the doors of Your mercy and make us amongst those who frequent Your mosques. Exalted is the praise of Your countenance.”

Have a quick look at the poster containing Rules and Etiquette of Mosque hanging near the entrance of the mosque and inside the mosque.

3. Please switch off or mute your cell/mobile phone. Experience has shown that phone rings irritate other worshippers and can sometime take away the concentration of worshippers including that of the imam.

Entering and being inside the Mosque

1. At the door of the mosque, recite this Du'a taught by Imam Hasan b. 'Ali al-Mujtaba (as):

إِلٰـهِي ضَيْفُكَ بِبَابِكَ، يَا مُحْسِنُ قَدْ أَتَاكَ الْمُسِيئُ فَتَجَاوَزْ عَنْ قَبِيحِ مَا عِنْدِي بِجَمِيلِ مَا عِنْدَكَ، يَا كَرِيمَ.

“Ilaahi dhayfuka bibaabik, yaa Muhsinu qad ataakal-musee', fatajaawaz `an qabihi maa `indee bijameeli maa `indak, yaa kareem.”

”My God, Your guest is at Your door. O the All-Beneficent, the sinner has come to You; so overlook what is ugly with me with that which is beautiful with You. O the All-Generous.”

2. Enter the mosque with humility and submissiveness for it is the house of Allah (swt) frequented by angels and believers.

3. It is forbidden to bring any inherently impure (najisul-`ayn) things into a mosque. Therefore, clothes containing blood, urine, semen, flesh of a dog or swine, etc. cannot be worn or carried when entering a mosque.

5. Greet the believers and angels with the best of greetings and a smiling face. Please note that if the believers are engaged in the Salat, it is not advisable to greet them.

6. Recite two rak'at prayer as a gesture of greeting and respect to the mosque.

(S). While in the mosque keep your focus on none other than Allah (swt) , as He says in the Qur'an:

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا

”Surely the mosques are for Allah (alone); so do not pray to anyone with Allah.” **(*72:18*)**

8. Keep the mosque clean, tidy and fragranced.

9. Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has recommended that we say many prayers and recite many supplications in mosques:

فَأَكْثِرُوا فِيهَا مِنَ الصَّلاَةِ وَالدُّعَاءِ.

10. Sending Salawat on Prophet Muhammad (S) and his family (as) is the most effective supplication that the Muslims are blessed with.

11. Spend as much time in the mosque as possible as the Noble Prophet (S) said to Abu Dharr: "As long as you are seated in the mosque, for every breath you take Allah will give you a rank in the paradise and the angels are praying for you."

12. It is recommended to say various prayers at different places or sites within the mosque. Therefore, for e.g., say Maghrib Salat at one place, nafilah of Maghrib at another place, and 'Isha prayers at yet another place. Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has stated: "Say your prayers in the mosques at different sites, for every site would witness for the person saying prayers on the Day of Resurrection."

13. Ensure not to contaminate any part of the mosque, for it is forbidden (haram) to do so and goes against the sanctity of the mosque.

14. If any part of the mosque is contaminated it is obligatory for all those present and those who have the knowledge of it to immediately purify it (make it tahir/pak).

15. When bringing young children who cannot discern right from the wrong, into the mosque, ensure that they are under your continuous care – both for the respect of the mosque and for those present in it.

16. When inside the mosque, you are a guest of Allah (swt) . Additionally, you are in the presence of angels and believers. Beautify the environment with continuous remembrance of Allah (swt) and pleading for His forgiveness (Istighfar).

17. Avoid worldly talks, discussion and recitations (e.g. non-religious poetry) while you are inside the mosque.

18. Carrying out business transactions in the mosque is abhorrent (makruh).

19. Playing board or computer games, hide and seek, or any sport in the mosque is abhorrent (makruh).

20. Raising one's voice for reciting or talking in the mosque is detestable. Of course reciting adhan, du'a, etc. for congregation is exempt from this rule.

21. When you take an item for use, (e.g. Holy Qur'an, book of Du'a, prostrating tablet (turbah/mohr) take care of it and return it to its original place (e.g. book case).

22. Do not remove or take away anything belonging to the mosque. If you need to borrow an item temporarily then ensure that you have sought permission from the trustee or a keeper of the Center.

When exiting the mosque, step out with the left foot and recite the following supplication:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ. أَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ فَاغْفِرْ ذُنُوبِي وَافْتَحْ أَبْوَابَ فَضْلِكَ.

“Bismillah. Allaahumma Salli 'Ala Muhammadin wa Aali Muhammad. Fagh-fir dhunoobe waf-tah abwaaba fadhlik.”

”(I exit) In the Name of Allah. O' Allah! send Your prayers upon Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad and forgive my sins and open the doors of Your grace (to me).”

“All praise belongs solely to Allah, the Lord of the Universe.”

Those who frequent and maintain the mosques of Allah (swt)

Immense Reward of Salatul Jama‘at

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى للّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ): أَتَانِي جَبْرَئِيلُ مَعَ سَبْعِينَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ بَعْدَ صَلاَةِ الظُّهْرِ. فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يُقْرِؤُكَ السَّلاَمَ وَ أَهْدَى إِلَيْكَ هَدِيَّتَيْنِ لَمْ يُهْدِهِمَا إِلَى نَبِيٍّ قَبْلَكَ. قُلْتُ: مَا الْهَدِيَّتَانِ؟ قَالَ: الْوَتْرُ ثَلاَثُ رَكَعَاتٍ وَ الصَّلاَةُ لْخَمْسُ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ. قُلْتُ: يَا جَبْرَئِيلُ وَ مَا لِأُمَّتِي فِي 9لْجَمَاعَةِ؟ قَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ: إِذَا كَانَا اثْنَيْنِ كَتَبَ للّٰهُ لِكُلِّ وٰاحِدٍ بِكُلِّ رَكْعَةٍ مِائَةَ وَ خَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً. وَ إِذَا كَانُوا ثَلاَثَةً كَتَبَاً للّٰهُ لِكُلِّ مِنْهُمْ بِكُلِّ رَكْعَةٍ سِتَّمِائَةِ صَلاَةٍ. وَ إِذَا كَانُوا أَرْبَعَةً كَتَبَ للّٰهُ لِكُلِّ وٰاحِدٍ بِكُلِّ رَكْعَةٍ أَلْفاً وَ مِائَتَيْ صَلاَةٍ. وَ إِذَا كَانُوا خَمْسَةً كَتَبَ للّٰهُ لِكُلِّ وٰاحِدٍ بِكُلِّ رَكْعَةٍ أَلْفَيْنِ وَ أَرْبَعَمِائَةِ صَلاَةٍ. وَ إِذَا كَانُوا سِتَّةً كَتَبَ لّٰهُ لِكُلِّ وٰاحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ بِكُلِّ

رَكْعَةٍ أَرْبَعَةَ آلاَفٍ وَ ثَمَانَمِائَةِ صَلاَةٍ. وَ إِذَا كَانُوا سَبْعَةً كَتَبَ للّٰهُ لِكُلِّ وٰاحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ بِكُلِّ رَكْعَةٍ تِسْعَةَ آلاَفٍ وَ سِتَّمِائَةِ صَلاَةٍ. وَ إِذَا كَانُوا ثَمَانِيَةً كَتَبَ للّٰهُ تَعَالَى لِكُلِّ وٰاحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ أَلْفاً وَ مِائَتَيْ صَلاَةٍ. وَ إِذَا كَانُوا تِسْعَةً كَتَبَ للّٰهُ تَعَالَى لِكُلِّ وٰاحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ بِكُلِّ رَكْعَةٍ سِتَّةً وَ ثَلاَثِينَ أَلْفاً وَ أَرْبَعَمِائَةِ صَلاَةٍ. وَ إِذَا كَانُوا عَشَرَةً كَتَبَ للّٰهُ تَعَالَى لِكُلِّ وٰاحِدٍ بِكُلِّ رَكْعَةٍ سَبْعِينَ أَلْفاً وَ أَلْفَيْنِ وَ ثَمَانَمِائَةِ صَلاَةٍ. إِنْ زَادُوا عَلَى الْعَشَرَةِ فَلَوْ صَارَتْ بِحَارُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ الأَرْضِ كُلُّهَا مِدَاداً وَ الأَشْجَارُ أَقْلاَماً وَ الثَّقَلاَنِ مَعَ الْمَلاَئِكَةِ كُتَّاباً لَمْ يَقْدِرُوا أَنْ يَكْتُبُوا ثَوَابَ رَكْعَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ! يَا مُحَمَّدُ تَكْبِيرَةٌ يُدْرِكُهَا الْمُؤْمِنُ مَعَ الإِمَامِ خَيْرٌ لَهُ مِنْ سِتِّينَ أَلْفَ حَجَّةٍ وَ عُمْرَةٍ وَ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَ مَا فِيهَا سَبْعِينَ أَلْفَ مَرَّةٍ وَ رَكْعَةٌ يُصَلِّيهَا الْمُؤْمِنُ مَعَ الإِمَامِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ مِائَةِ أَلْفِ دِينَارٍ يَتَصَدَّقُ بِهَا عَلَى الْمَسَاكِينِ وَ سَجْدَةٌ يَسْجُدُهَا الْمُؤْمِنُ مَعَ الإِمَامِ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عِتْقِ مِائَةِ رَقَبَةٍ.

The Prophet of Allah (blessings of Allah be upon him and his family) has narrated that Jibra`il once came to him after Salat al-Zuhr accompanied by 70,000 Angels and said, 'O Muhammad, your Lord conveys greetings to you and has granted you two gifts which he has not granted to any Prophet before you.'

I said (to Jibra`il), “What are these two gifts?”

He said: “The Witr Salat which has three Raka'at (i.e. two Rak'at prayer of Shaf'a and one Rak'ah prayer of Witr said late after the 8 Rak'at Nafilah of night) and the saying of five (daily) prayers in congregation (Jama'at).”

I said, “O Jibra`il, what reward is there for my Ummah in saying the prayers in congregation (Jama'at)?”

Jibra`il replied, 'O' Muhammad:

· When there are two people (saying congregational prayers), then Allah will record the reward for each Rak'at is being equal to 150 Salat;

· When there are three people, then Allah will record the reward for each Rak'at is being equal to 600 Salat;

· When there are four people, then Allah will record the reward for each Rak'at is being equal to 1,200 Salat;

· When there are five people, then Allah will record the reward for each Rak'at is being equal to 2,400 Salat;

· When there are six people, then Allah will record the reward for each Rak'at is being equal to 4,800 Salat;

· When there are seven people, then Allah will record the reward for each Rak'at is being equal to 9,600 Salat;

·When there are eight people, then Allah will record the reward for each Rak'at is being equal to 19,200 Salat;

· When there are nine people, then Allah will record the reward for each Rak'at is being equal to 37,400 Salat;

· When there are ten people, then Allah will record the reward for each Rak'at is being equal to 72,800 Salat.

[O Muhammad] If there were more than ten people attending the congregational prayer then if all the rivers in the Heavens and the Earth were to become ink, and all the trees (are used as) pens and all of the Jinn, human beings along with the Angels together were to write the reward of one Rak'at prayed, they would not be able to do so.

O' Muhammad! The (first) Takbir (i.e. Takbiratul Ihram) that the believer performs with the imam (of the congregational prayer) is better than performing 60,000 Hajj and 'Umrah and better than 70,000 times

what is in this world. For ever Rak'at that a believer prays in congregation is better than 100,000 dinar (gold coins) given in charity to the poor. For ever Sajdah that the believer performs in the congregational prayer is better than freeing 1,000 slaves.'"

Ref: Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, Volume 1, Page 487

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The Holy Qur`an

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The Noble Qur'an And Hadith On Salat

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ 1

Certainly, the faithful have attained salvation " (***23: 1***)

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ 2

"those who have humbled themselves in their prayers." (***23:2***)

Imam Husayn b. 'Ali (as) described the prayer of his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (S): "He used to weep until he filled the place with tears on account of his fear for Allah, the Mighty and the Sublime. (This was his state) though, he (i.e. the Messenger) had done nothing wrong."

The right of your ritual prayer (Salat) is that you know that it is an arrival before God and that through it you are standing before Him. When you know that, then you will stand in the station of him who is lowly, vile, beseeching, trembling, hopeful, fearful, and abased, and you will magnify Him who is before you through stillness and dignity. You will approach the prayer with your heart and you will perform it according to its bounds and its rights. (Risalah al-Huquq, Imam 'Ali Zaynul 'Abidin (as))

Each and every prayer should be the final prayer

The Noble Prophet (S): "When you say your Salat, say it in a way that it the final prayer of your life."

Successful are those who say their prayers with humbleness

Nothing takes priority once the prayer time approaches

'Aisha, the wife of Prophet Muhammad (S) says: “The Messenger would talk with us and we would talk with him. When the time of salat approached, he would be as if he no longer knows us and nor did we know him (i.e. all family socialization would end and he would focus his attention to worshipping his Lord).”

Do not take your prayers lightly

The Noble Prophet (S) has said, “One who takes his prayer lightly is not from my followers; he/she would not return to me at the pool (of Kawthar) – surely, by Allah he would not (meet me).”

Consequence of not saying Salat

”There are three kinds of people, even if they were Muslims, would not be greeted, given daughters in marriage and taken as partners in business. These are those who abandon their prayers, consume alcohol and indulge in gambling.”

فِي جَنَّاتٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ 40

”In the Gardens they will ask one another” (***74:40***)

عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ 41

”about the guilty (***sinners***)***”*** (***74:41***)

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرَ 42

”'What led you into Hell Fire?” (***74:42***)

قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ 43

”They will say: 'We were not of those who prayed'” (***74:43***)

“And I have no success in my endeavours except with the help of Allah.”

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