

149443 - Ruling on taking mosques as thoroughfares

the question

I pray Zuhr in the mosque of the company where I work. When the time for prayer comes, I go to do wudu in the wudu facility of the mosque. Is entering the mosque and exiting from the other side in order to reach the wudu facility regarded as taking mosques as thoroughfares? Please note that I could reach the wudu-place without having to go through the mosque, but the distance will be longer.

Detailed answer

It is soundly narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade taking mosques as thoroughfares.

It was narrated from `Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Do not take mosques as thoroughfares, [and do not enter them] except to remember Allah or pray.” Narrated by at-Tabarani in *Al-Mu`jam al-Kabir* (12/314), and in *Al-Mu`jam al-Awsat* (1/14).

Shaykh al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: This is a sound chain of narration; all its narrators are trustworthy. (*As-Silsilat as-Sahihah*, 1001).

It says in *Ath-Thamar al-Mustatab* (p. 724):

This is a good chain of narration; all its narrators are trustworthy.

End quote.

What is meant by taking mosques as thoroughfares is using them as a route for people to reach their destinations, so they enter from one door and exit from another without praying. As for one who does that, but he prays two rak`ahs in the mosque, he is not regarded as taking the mosque as a thoroughfare.

It was narrated from `Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) that he disapproved of that.

Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah have mercy on him) said: One of the portents of the Hour is that people will pass through a mosque without praying two rak`ahs in it.

It was said to al-Hasan al-Basri: Would you not disapprove of a man passing through the mosque without praying in it? He said: Of course.

See: *Al-Musannaf* by `Abd ar-Razzaq (3/154-158).

Secondly:

With regard to the ruling on passing through the mosque without praying, if that is for a reason or a need, such as if it is too difficult to take a different route, then there is nothing wrong with that, but if it is done without a valid excuse, then it is disliked (makruh).

This is indicated by the details in some hadiths and reports which speak about it being permissible to pass through the mosque. Al-Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) included a chapter in his *Sahih* titled “Chapter on passing through the mosque,” in which he narrated the hadith of Abu Musa al-Ash`ari (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever passes through any of our mosques or our marketplaces carrying arrows, let him hold them in his hand by their heads, lest he cause injury to any Muslim.”

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Chapter on passing through the mosque” means it is permissible. This heading is based on the hadith narrated under that chapter heading, which clearly indicates that. (*Fat-h al-Bari*, 1/547).

This hadith indicates that it is permissible to pass through the mosque, and that is to be understood as referring to when that is done for a valid reason or a need.

Ibn al-Humam (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It is not permissible to take the mosque as a thoroughfare for no valid reason, but if there is a valid reason, there is nothing wrong with it. (*Fat-h al-Qadir*, 1/422).

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to not taking the mosque as a thoroughfare, some of the scholars regarded it as disliked to pass through the mosque except for a good reason, and if there is an alternative route, one should not pass through the mosque. (*Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* 6/64).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about a Christian or Jew entering the mosque with the permission of a Muslim, or without his permission, or taking it as a thoroughfare: is that permissible?

He said:

The Muslim has no right to take the mosque as a thoroughfare, so how about if a disbeliever takes it as a thoroughfare? That should definitely not be allowed. But if a dhimmi [non-Muslim living under Muslim rule] enters the mosque for a valid reason, there are two scholarly views regarding that. (*Al-Fatawa al-Kubra* 2/80).

Shaykh al-Albani said:

The way to understand the permissibility of passing through the mosque is to understand it as being applicable when it is done for a valid reason and no other route is available, so that it will not lead to taking the mosque as a thoroughfare in the ways that are prohibited, as mentioned above. (*Ath-Thamar al-Mustatab*, p. 727).

Based on that, if your taking the other (longer) route will cause hardship, this hardship makes it permissible for you to pass through the mosque, and this action is not disliked in this case.

But even if it will not cause any hardship to do that, then what appears to be the case in your situation is that there is still nothing wrong with you passing through the mosque, because your aim in doing that is only to do wudu so that you can come back to the mosque and pray in it. An

action such as this is not regarded as transgressing the sanctity of the mosque, because you are entering the mosque and exiting from it in order to come back to it in a state of purity to pray.

And Allah knows best.