120234 - Should he approve of their playing cards so that they will not go to dance halls and clubs?

the question

We are receiving medical treatment in America, and we are living in a residential complex with approximately twenty families. We do not have a mosque in the complex, but one good person has rented one of the apartments for one year to be used as a musalla (prayer place) where the brothers can meet and socialize and organize lessons. After finishing ‘Isha prayer, some of the brothers - may Allah guide them - play cards in this apartment. One of the brothers told them off and said that it is not permissible to play cards at all, let alone in the musalla. But one of them responded by saying that if they did not play these card games, they would have too much free time which would lead them to go to immoral places such as dance halls and night clubs. Please note that some of those who play cards attend Fajr prayer. We hope that you can give us a fatwa on the permissibility of playing cards in this rented place in the situation described here. Is it permissible to play cards in a place like this musalla which that doer of good set up for prayer, meeting and remembering Allah? Is it permissible to sit with them when they are playing these games, or is it essential to keep away from them?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I think that it is not permissible to play such games in this place that has been prepared for performance of prayers and has been rented by this good person. Undoubtedly these games in which there is no benefit are a waste of valuable time that should be used to acquire beneficial knowledge and spent in dhikr, du‘aa’, worship and earning income by permissible means. But if it is known that if they did not play these games they would go to something worse than that, such as theatres or places with dancing and music, where they would see scantily dressed women,

indecent movies and so on, then it is permissible for them to keep busy with these games which will distract them from sin and evil, and the causes of fitnah (temptation). Some kinds of evil are less serious than others. But they should not do that in this place that has been prepared for prayer; rather they should go back to their homes or to places where such games are appropriate, such as cafes and parks and so on. And Allah knows best. End quote.

Website of Shaykh ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Abd al-Rahmaan al-Jibreen

http://www.ibnjebreen.com/ftawa.php?view=vmasal&subid=10991&parent=3345.