

The Privacy of the Places of Worship

﴿وَلَوْلَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهَدَمْتُمْ صَوَامِعَ وَبِيَعٍ
وَصَلَوَاتٍ وَمَسَاجِدٍ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا﴾

Dear brothers and sisters!

Human beings, the most honorable of all creations in the universe, have been created worthy of all praise and respect. As it has superior qualities such as reason and will, it can distinguish good from bad, right from wrong, and beautiful from ugly. Every human being is born as free and innocent. It is forbidden by our religion to interfere with the freedoms of people, to restrict their rights of life, to take away their freedom of belief and worship, and to steal their rights of owning possessions. These issues have been accepted as mutual human values by all religions throughout history. Therefore, no human being can be subjected to a different treatment due to their belief, language, race, and color. The freedom of thought and belief and the desire to worship freely are the most natural rights of every human being.

Dear Muslims!

The places of worship, which have no purpose other than worshiping Allah, are sacred places for all religions. It is the common value of humanity and are areas of immunity. As Allah (s.w.t) says “**Had Allah not repelled the aggression of some people by means of others, destruction would have surely claimed monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which Allah’s Name is often mentioned.**”¹ He clearly states that places of worship and the worshippers inside them are inviolable. In this context, mosques are the home of Allah and the most sacred places of worship for Muslims. Therefore, honoring mosques and the people who worship in them, and respecting their worship is like showing respect to Allah. It is a great injustice to keep people away from mosques and attempt to prevent them from remembering Allah (s.w.t). No matter what reason whatsoever, it is unacceptable to enter the Masjid al-Aqsa, one of the most sacred mosques of Muslims, with boots and throw gas bombs on people in worship, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. Violence and harassment of people who are engaged in worship in the mosque and preventing their worship is the greatest disrespect against both the privacy of the mosque and the Muslims.

It is a behavior that no human being with mercy and conscience can ever accept. Where else will people see themselves in the places of worship, the centers of peace and trust, if they cannot feel safe? Touching the privacy of these sacred places means touching the peace and serenity of humanity. Places of worship should never be places of violence and aggression. Our religion, Islam, has never approved of such behavior, but rather prohibited it.

As a matter of fact, we saw together in the following process of just how dangerous such actions are. With the violence and harassment spreading throughout the region, hundreds of innocent people died or got injured. We invite those responsible to take the necessary steps as soon as possible and put an end to this terrible violence and establish permanent peace.

Dear Jamaat!

Within lawful measures, it is the most natural right of people to react to these violent scenes and aggressive treatments, which no conscience will ever accept. However, while doing all these, Islam's measure of justice and mercy should never be left behind. One should not go overboard and be in an unfair situation when wanting justice. Whatever the reason may be, harassing people for their beliefs, and attacking temples, synagogues and churches is not Islamic, nor is it humanitarian. Thus, Islam has strictly forbidden such behavior.

In such sensitive times we are in, everyone should act with common sense and not add fuel to the fire. We should not scream for war that would cost the lives of children, women, and innocent people. Sacred cities, the common heritage of ancient civilizations, should not be destroyed by weapons and bombs. Our legacy that we will leave to our children should not be burned and destroyed. It should not be war-torn and unlivable cities, but rather a world where they can live safely and freely. For this cause, regardless of their beliefs, people of virtue who have the same excitement and same troubles should take action and raise their voices for the sake of human rights, justice, peace and freedom.

Brothers and Sisters!

We shall conclude our khutbah with a short dua:

O Allah! Forgive our sins. Forgive our faults and wrongdoings. Make each of us successful in deeds suitable for your consent. Protect us all from deeds contrary to your consent. O Allah! You subject us to heavy tests because of what we commit with our hands and our tongues. O Allah! Make us of those who are successful, not of those who lose their way and direction, fail the test. O Allah! You test your servants in many ways. You test them sometimes by hunger, sometimes by fullness, sometimes by poverty, sometimes by richness, sometimes by decreasing, sometimes by increasing. O Allah! In any case, you are the one who tests. Do not make us of those who give a lot and get angry, nor of those who give less, rebel against you and forget you! O Allah! Give us the strength to endure patience. Give us the strength to resist the heaviest tests.

O Allah! Show your mercy and grace to our oppressed and victimized brothers and sisters in Masjid al-Aqsa and Sheikh Jarrah. Give them strength and patience.

¹ Hac suresi, 22:40

Give mercy to those who lost their lives. O Allah! have mercy on the oppressed in East Turkistan, Yemen, and many parts of the world who were unjustly displaced from their homes, separated from their families, and suffered their lives on asylum seeking!

O Allah! Protect us from the sickness of urging to have power, from resentment, hatred, and extreme passion that humanity has been dragged into. Grant us all a life attached to Islam and a death in full faith. Amin

