

THE FIQH OF THE IMAM AND CONGREGATION POSITION AS DESIGN GUIDELINES IN DESIGNING A VERTICAL MOSQUE

Muhammar Khamdevi

The Study Program of Architecture,
Tanri Abeng University, Jakarta, Indonesia
e-mail: m_khamdevi@tauniversity.ac.id

Abstract

In the books of hadeeth and fiqh, it has been narrated many instructions about the imam and congregation position, especially about the position between the imam and the congregation and about the farthest and highest distance of the last row. Surprisingly, if we look closely, these lead us to the possibility in designing a vertical mosque. That is important to address the problem of urban sprawl, where the buildings would have to be directed vertically to solve urban density and to avoid further loss of urban green space. But, is there any high restriction in the hadeeth and the fiqh? Would it be opposed to other hadeeths about the warning of vying to build a magnificent tall mosque? This paper discussed about the possibility in designing a vertical mosque in terms of islamic fiqh and architecture. The research aimed to create a design guideline for vertical mosque and to correct some misconceptions in designing a mosque. This research used a qualitative method, namely literature review. The outcome of this research is the guidelines in designing a vertical mosque.

Keywords: *Fiqh, Islamic Architecture, Imam and Congregation, Mosque*

Abstrak

Dalam buku-buku hadits dan fiqh banyak diriwayatkan petunjuk-petunjuk mengenai posisi imam dan jamaah, terutama tentang posisi antara imam dan jamaah dan tentang jarak terjauh dan tertinggi dari baris shaf terakhir. Ternyata jika dicermati, ini membawa kita kepada kemungkinan dalam merancang sebuah masjid vertikal. Hal ini sangat penting untuk menjawab masalah urban sprawl, di mana bangunan harus diarahkan secara vertikal untuk mengatasi kepadatan kota dan menghindari kehilangan lebih lanjut dari ruang terbuka hijau. Tapi, apakah ada pembatasan tingginya pada hadits dan fiqh? Apakah itu akan bertentangan dengan hadits lain mengenai peringatan berlomba membangun masjid mewah dan tinggi? Makalah ini membahas kemungkinan dalam merancang sebuah masjid vertikal dari segi fiqh islam dan arsitektur. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk membuat pedoman desain untuk masjid vertikal dan memperbaiki beberapa anggapan salah dalam merancang masjid. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif, yakni literatur review. Hasil penelitian ini adalah berupa pedoman desain dalam merancang sebuah masjid vertikal.

Kata Kunci: *Fiqh, Arsitektur Islam, Imam dan Jamaah, Masjid*

Introduction

Mosque is the most easily identifiable element in Islamic architecture. Islam did not instruct how to build a mosque, but Islam did instruct to build it to put into function as a place for prayer in congregation and community development centre¹. Gazalba explained that root of word 'masjid' is 'sajd' which means 'to prostrate'. The word 'mosque' in contemporary meaning, is a building used by Muslims for the performance of prayer².

Performing the prayers in congregation is a *sunnah mu'akkadah*³. Abu Hurairah reports that the Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam said: "*The prayer of a man in congregation is twenty-five times more superior (in reward) to his prayer in his house or market - and this is because he makes the wudu' and perfects it and goes to the mosque with the sole purpose of performing the salah. He does not take a step without being raised a degree and having one of his sins erased. When he prays, as long as he does not lose his wudu, the angels keep on praying (for*

him) 'O Allah, bless him. O Allah, have mercy on him.' And he is considered in salah as long as he is waiting for the salah." This is related by al-Bukhari and Muslim, and it is presented in al-Bukhari's wording⁴.

As we heard, the expansion of the Haram is in progress. The expansion project includes the expansion of the Mataf area and increasing the number of floors to six. The expansion of Al-Haram will accommodate 2 million worshippers⁵. This expansion brought controversy, but only due to the demolition of the Islamic heritage. Prior to commencing the expansion, the rulers took the opinion of the eminent Ulama from across the world and they all supported this meritorious endeavour⁶.

What about the next 50 to 100 years? Is the addition of more floors still possible according to Islamic fiqh to meet the larger capacity again? Could the concept of vertical mosque be raised to address the needs? To achieve the right solution, we need to discuss about the fiqh of the congregation prayer,

especially about the fiqh of the imam and the congregation position, as a appropriate reference rather than the architectural precedent studies of mosque, due to Islamic restriction in designing mosque. And then we could translate or interpret them in architectural perspective.

On the other hand, nowadays, the city in many countries become increasingly dense and the urban sprawl occurred. The land is getting more expensive and the green open spaces are disappearing. Therefore, the development of vertical solutions for all building functions in urban areas became the answer. It would be a challenge for a new direction in further mosque development in urban areas⁷.

Moreover, the mosque that was once became the main city skyline, as if its existence is now submerged by high rise buildings. Its role as an important part of the city is fade. In 2011, the architecture consultant from Netherlands, namely IND, tried to bring back the role by making a concept proposal of vertical mosque in Turkey, called 'Mosque Tower'⁸.

Due to the needs in the present and in the future, and also the maintaining of the past role, those are why the vertical mosque became the main object of this research. This paper discussed about the possibility in designing a vertical mosque in terms of islamic fiqh and architecture. As complementary, this research also wants to correct some misconceptions, especially about the position of the imam and the congregation, which have been found during the research progress.

Methodology

This research used the method of literature review. This literature review method covers general processes such as: systemic identification of theory, literature searching and finding, and analysis of documents containing information that related to the research topic. Literature sources is derived from books of hadith, book of fiqh, other scientific books, research findings, and other sources that related to the issues discussed. Then the literature sources are analyzed comparatively to get deep and rich discussion. So, the result can be formulated clearly and accurately.

Discussions

The Hadeeths about The Position of Imam and Congregation

In Sayyid Sabiq's *Fiqhus-Sunna* Volume 2, it is disliked (*makruh*) for the imam to be at a higher place than the congregation⁹.

Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari says: "*The Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam prohibited that the imam should stand on something higher than the people behind him.*" This is related by ad-Daraqutni, while al-Hafez is silent about it in al-Talkhis.

Hamam ibn al-Harith relates that Huzhaifah led the people in prayer in Mada'in (Iraq) and he stood on a bench. Abu Mas'ud pulled his shirt with a strong

grip. When he finished his prayer Abu Mas'ud said: "*Do you not know that this has been prohibited?*" Huzhaifah said: "*Certainly, I know it. I remembered it when you pulled me.*" This is related by Abu Dawud, ash-Shafi'i, and al-Baihaqi. Al-Hakim, Ibn Khuzaimah, and Ibn Hibban grade it sahih.

Other narrations also mentioned the same issue¹⁰: Hammim said: "*Hudzaifah led the people in prayer in al Mada'in standing on shop (or a bench). Abu Mas'ud took him by his shirt, and brought him down. When he (Abu Mas'ud) finished his prayer, he said: 'Yes, I remembered when you pulled down.'*" (Sunan Abu Dawud, Vol. 1, pp. 157-158)

'Adi b. Thabit al-Ansari said: "*A man related to me that (once) he was in the company of 'Ammar b. Yasir in al-Mada'in (a city near Kufah). The iqamah was called for prayer. 'Ammar came forward and stood on a shop (or a bench) and prayed while the people stood on lower place than he. Hudzaifah came forward and took him: 'Did you not hear the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) say: When a man leads the people in prayer, he must not stand in a position higher than theirs, or words to that effect? 'Ammar replied: 'That is why I followed you when you took me by the hand.'*" (Sunan Abu Dawud, Vol. 1, p. 158)

On the other hand, it is permissible (*mubah*) for the congregation to be at a higher place than the imam. Sa'id ibn Mansur, ash-Shafi'i, al-Baihaqi, and al-Bukhari, in his comments, relate from Abu Hurairah that he prayed at the top of the mosque while following the imam. Anas used to pray in the room of Abu Nafi to the right of the mosque and the room was his height's high and its door faced the mosque of Basrah and Anas would pray in it, following the imam. The companions did not say anything about it. This is related by Sa'id ibn Mansur in his Sunan⁹.

So these hadeeths will be guidelines in designing general mosque and also the vertical mosque, that the imam space should not be higher than the congregation. However, a lot of mosques nowadays are mistaken in designing the imam space, where the imam floor is higher than the floor of the congregation. Sometimes the space is resolved with very thick prayer mat or multilayered carpets with pads. Some mosques in the world, especially in Indonesia, did the same thing. Then this should be clarified.

The Hadeeths about A barrier between The Imam and The Congregation

The congregation can follow the imam, even if there is a barrier between them, as long as he or she can tell the imam's movements either by seeing or hearing⁹.

Al-Bukhari records: "Al-Hassan said: 'There is no problem if you pray and between you and him [the imam] there is a river.' Abu Majliz said: 'Follow the imam, even if between you and him there is a road or a wall, as long as you can hear the opening takbir.'"

In other narration stated:

'A'isha said: "The Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) offered the prayer in his apartment and the people were following him behind the apartment"¹⁰.

The congregation must know the movements of the imam by seeing the imam, by seeing the congregation rows behind the imam or by hearing the imam voice⁴. But the congregation must be with his imam in a mosque or else within 300 cubits. Like the narration below⁹:

Ash-Shaukani observes: "If the follower is extremely high above the imam, for example, three hundred cubit lengths, and he could not know what action the imam is doing then it is prohibited by consensus whether he is in a mosque or somewhere else. If it is less than that, it is permitted on the principle that unless proved otherwise a thing is permissible. This basis is supported by the above mentioned act of Abu Hurairah to which no one objected."

These hadeeths showed that if the farthest and the highest distance of the last row from the imam is 300 cubits (150 meters). In a comparative study of other research founded that the minimum size of a prayer room for one person is 60 cm x 100 cm¹¹. So in 150 meters there would be roughly for 150 persons and 30-50 storeys vertically.

The positioning of the men, the young and the women congregation

In Fiqhus-Sunna stated the following hadeeths: The Messenger of Allah placed the men in front of the young boys and the women behind the young boys. This is related by Ahmad and Abu Dawud⁹.

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah said: "The best rows for the men are the first rows and the worst rows for them are the last rows. The best rows for the women are the last rows and the worst for them are the front rows." The last rows are the best for the women because they are farther away from the men as against the first rows that are nearest to men's rows. This is related by the group except al-Bukhari.

These narrations would be the additional guideline to arrange optional congregation positioning in vertical mosque. Where should be the position of the men and where should be the position of the women vertically.

The Guidelines in Designing Vertical Mosque

It can be simplified, that the guidelines in designing vertical mosque are:

1. The imam space should not be higher than the congregation.
Actually, this guideline is applicable to all designs mosque. Nonetheless, this is the main key for designing vertical mosque.
2. The farthest and the highest distance of the last row from the imam is 300 cubits (150 meters). That is roughly for 150 persons horizontally and 30-50 storeys vertically. But this is only when we

see it two-dimensionally. When we see it three-dimensionally, then the distance restriction will look like a quarter sphere. If we assume the mass of the mosque has a rectangular prism shape, then we get a lot of variations of the rectangular prism shape. This guideline also allows the design of the mosque like auditorium. So this allows the design of the mosque with an acoustic approach.

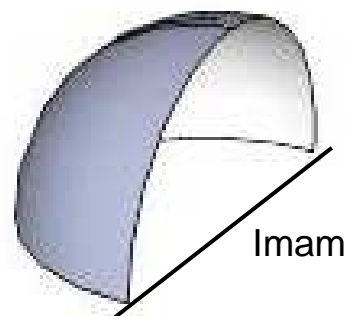


Figure 1. The Distance Restriction in Designing Vertical Mosque

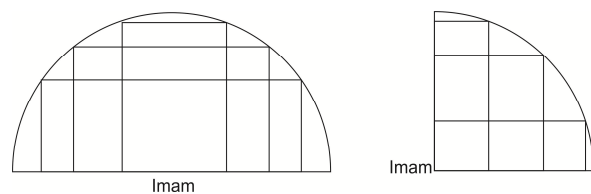


Figure 2. The Variations of Rectangular Shape

3. The optional arrangement for the positioning of men and women congregation

There are two basic options to arrange the positioning of men and women congregation. However, both can be developed more depending on the design context.

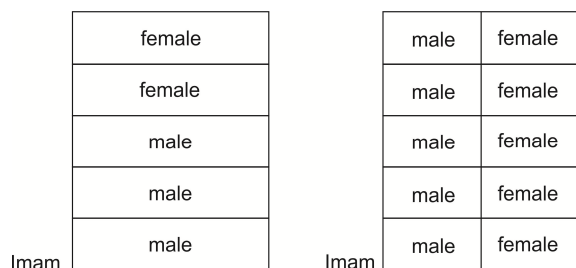


Figure 3. The Positioning of men and women congregation

4. This vertical mosque can be also attached on any storey of high rise building. Because there is no instruction from the hadeeth and the Quran, that says about an obligation to put a mosque on top of the building.

The Warning in Building High Mosque

There are some narrations about the prohibition in Building High Mosque, such as¹⁰:

Ibn 'Abbas reported the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) as saying: "I was not commended to build high mosque." Ibn 'Abbas said: "You will certainly adorn them as the Jews and Christians did." (Sunan Abu Dawud, Vol. I, p. 116)

Anas reported the Prophet (may peace be upon him) as saying: "The Last Hour will not come, until people vie with one another about mosques." (Sunan Abu Dawud, Vol. I, p. 279)

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: "... And when you see the sheperds a black camels exalting in building - that is one of the signs of Doom..." (Sahih Muslim. Vol. I, p. 4)

It is narrated on the authority of Yahya b. Ya'mar that the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said about the hour of the Doom: "... That the slave-girl would give birth to her mistress and master, that you would fine barefooted, destitute shepherds of goats vying with another, in the construction of magnificent buildings..." (Sahih Muslim, Vol. I, pp. 1-3)

By pulling the common thread from the hadeeths, the warning is intended solely for the bad intention. The aim of the mosque development is only to satisfy the materialistic and hedonic life and to show arrogance and power. So if the vertical mosque is intended for noble things, especially to address the needs of the people and the environment functionally, so this does not become a bad thing.

Conclusions

Islam is a religion that can be adapted throughout the ages. Its teaching is very comprehensive to answer any new issues in line with the world development in economy and technology. Islam would not be contrary to any science. He just "dipped" them to a more ethical.

In architecture, history has proven that Islam can blend with any different contexts. The Hadith and The Quran are not frightening things anymore. But they serve as references and recommendations in designing a built environment. That is what this research want to show in this paper.

It turns out that some of the hadeeths can be foundations in designing vertical mosque. Hopefully, this concept could address the urban issues, especially the vertical development due to the limitation of the land. So the approach of the smart growth or the compact city can be realized to solve the urban sprawl and the loss of green open space. The result of this reserach is the guideline in designing vertical mosque, as the following:

1. The imam space should not be higher than the congregation
2. The farthest and the highest distance of the last row from the imam is 300 cubits (150 meters).
3. Two optional arrangements for the positioning of men and women congregation
4. The possibilities to attach the vertical mosque on any storey of high rise building.

References

- 1 Spahic Omer. 2009. *Islamic Architecture: Its Philosophy, Spiritual Significance and Some Early Developments*. Gombak: A. S. Noordeen
- 2 Mohd. Tajuddin Haji Mohd. Rasdi. 1998. *The Mosque as Community Development Center: Programme and Architectural Design Guidelines for Contemporary Muslim Societies*. Skudai: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
- 3 H. Mochtar Anwar. 1973. *Fiqh Islam: Tarjamah Matan Taqrib*. Bandung: PT. Al Ma'arif
- 4 H. Sulaiman Rasjid. 2001. *Fiqh Islam*. Bandung: PT. Sinar Baru Algensindo
- 5 N.n. 2013. *Haram Mosque to have six floors after expansion*. Iqraa.com. [accessed on 24th February 2013]. <http://iqraa.com/en/newsdetails.aspx?NewsID=583>
- 6 Mariam Al Hakeem. 2008. *Expansion of Haram in Makkah largest in history*. Gulfnews.com. [accessed on 24th February 2013]. <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/expansion-of-haram-in-makkah-largest-in-history-1.104712>
- 7 Aldyfra L. Lukman. 2000. *Mesjid vertikal: sebuah visi mengenai perkembangan arsitektur masjid di kawasan perkotaan Indonesia masa depan*. Thesis. Bandung: Program Magister Arsitektur PPS-ITB
- 8 N.n. 2011. *Mosque Tower, Turkey*. Concept Proposal by IND. Architizer.com. [accessed on 15th January 2013]. http://www.architizer.com/en_us/projects/view/mosque-tower/7057/
- 9 Sayyid Sabiq. 1976. *Fikih Sunnah. Vol. 2*. Bandung: PT. Al Ma'arif
- 10 Mohd. Tajuddin Haji Mohd. Rasdi. 2004. *Hadith and Mosque. Hadith as a Guide In Designing Mosque*. Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributors Sdn Bhd
- 11 Andrey Caesar Effendi. 2008. *Mesjid di Kebon Jeruk*. Thesis. Jakarta: BINUS