

THE PROHIBITION OF SLEEPING IN MOSQUES: A LIBRARY RESEARCH ON ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE AND CONTEMPORARY FATWAS

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Abstract

This study examines the prohibition of sleeping in mosques through a library research approach, focusing on classical Islamic jurisprudence and contemporary fatwas. The research aims to explore how different schools of Islamic law (madhāhib) conceptualize the permissibility or restriction of sleeping in mosques, and how modern religious authorities interpret and regulate this practice in response to current social contexts. Primary sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical fiqh manuals are analyzed alongside recent fatwas issued by religious institutions in Indonesia and other Muslim-majority countries. The findings indicate that while sleeping in mosques is generally permitted under certain conditions—such as i'tikāf, necessity, or travel—many contemporary fatwas and mosque management bodies discourage or restrict the practice to maintain the sanctity, cleanliness, and primary function of the mosque as a place of worship. This study highlights the dynamic interplay between normative Islamic teachings and contemporary socio-institutional needs, revealing ongoing tensions between religious permissibility and practical governance of sacred spaces.

Keywords: Mosque, Islamic Jurisprudence, Fatwa, Prohibition, Sleeping, Sacred Space

Abstrak

Studi ini meneliti larangan tidur di masjid melalui pendekatan riset pustaka, dengan fokus pada yurisprudensi Islam klasik dan fatwa kontemporer. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana berbagai mazhab hukum Islam (madhāhib) mengkonseptualisasikan kebolehan atau pembatasan tidur di masjid, dan bagaimana otoritas agama modern menafsirkan dan mengatur praktik ini sebagai respons terhadap konteks sosial saat ini. Sumber primer seperti Al-Qur'an, Hadits, dan kitab-kitab fiqh klasik dianalisis bersama dengan fatwa-fatwa terbaru yang dikeluarkan oleh lembaga-lembaga keagamaan di Indonesia dan negara-negara mayoritas Muslim lainnya. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meskipun tidur di masjid umumnya diperbolehkan dalam kondisi tertentu—seperti i'tikaf, kebutuhan, atau perjalanan—banyak fatwa kontemporer dan badan pengelola masjid melarang atau membatasi praktik tersebut untuk menjaga kesucian, kebersihan, dan fungsi utama masjid sebagai tempat ibadah. Studi ini menyoroti interaksi dinamis antara ajaran Islam normatif dan kebutuhan sosial-institusional kontemporer, mengungkapkan ketegangan yang berkelanjutan antara kebolehan agama dan tata kelola praktis ruang-ruang suci.

Kata kunci: Masjid, Yurisprudensi Islam, Fatwa, Larangan, Tidur, Ruang Suci



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INTRODUCTION

Mosques are among the most significant institutions in Islamic civilization, serving not only as sacred spaces of worship but also as centers of education, community interaction, and social welfare. Historically, the mosque has provided a multifunctional role, including offering temporary shelter for travelers and the poor. Early Islamic tradition records that some of the Prophet's companions, such as the *Ahl al-Ṣuffah*, resided and slept in the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah (al-Nawawī, *al-Majmū'*, vol. 2, p. 160). Ibn 'Umar also narrated: "*We used to sleep in the mosque during the time of the Messenger of Allah*" (Ibn Mājah, Sunan, no. 750), demonstrating that sleeping in mosques was not uncommon in the formative period of Islam.

The mosque (*masjid*) has historically occupied a central position in the religious, social, and cultural life of Muslim communities. In addition to functioning as a sacred space for ritual devotion, particularly the five daily prayers and Friday congregational prayer, mosques in the early Islamic period also served as multifunctional institutions. During the time of the Prophet Muhammad, the mosque was not only a place of worship but also a center for governance, education, and social welfare. The Prophet's Mosque in Medina accommodated the *Ahl al-Ṣuffah*, a group of impoverished Companions who resided in the mosque, thereby illustrating that the mosque historically provided shelter as part of its broader communal role. Such examples underscore that the question of sleeping in mosques is deeply rooted in the lived practices of the earliest Muslim generations.

As Islam spread across different regions, mosques retained their dual character as both sacred and communal spaces. In medieval Cairo, for instance, mosques were used as centers for transmitting knowledge and hosting travelers, as documented by Jonathan Berkey in *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo*. Similarly, in Andalusia and the wider Ottoman world, mosques often provided lodging for students and Sufi practitioners who sought proximity to spaces of spiritual activity. These historical precedents suggest that the permissibility of sleeping in mosques was not merely tolerated but was integrated into the fabric of Muslim social life.

In contrast, the modern period has witnessed significant changes in how mosques are managed and regulated. With the rise of nation-states, bureaucratic governance, and urbanization, mosques have increasingly become institutionalized spaces. Their management is often tied to state authorities or large religious organizations, which has led to new administrative concerns such as hygiene, security, and crowd control. Consequently, sleeping in mosques—once a common and accepted practice—has become subject to restrictions and, in some cases, outright prohibition. This shift raises important questions about the tension between classical jurisprudential rulings and modern institutional policies, highlighting the need for scholarly inquiry into how Islamic law adapts to contemporary social realities.

Classical jurists across the Sunni schools of law generally permitted sleeping in mosques under certain conditions. For instance, the Shāfi'ī jurist al-Nawawī (d. 1277) noted that there was no objection to sleeping in mosques so long as cleanliness and etiquette were observed.¹ The Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn Qudāmah (d. 1223) in *al-Mughnī* also discussed permissibility with emphasis on the mosque's sanctity. These views suggest that the legal tradition treated sleeping in mosques as permissible (*mubāḥ*), though not encouraged without necessity, especially if it risked disturbing others.²

In contemporary times, however, the issue has become more complex. Many mosques, particularly in urban centers, prohibit congregants from sleeping within their premises. For example, in Saudi Arabia, authorities at the Grand Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah have explicitly discouraged sleeping inside, citing reasons of orderliness, crowd management, and preservation of the sacred environment.³ In Indonesia, several mosque managements boards have adopted similar restrictions, often justified on grounds of cleanliness, safety, and the dignity of the mosque.

This divergence between classical permissibility and modern restrictions reflects a dynamic negotiation between scriptural tradition and contemporary socio-religious governance. While fiqh literature largely tolerates sleeping in mosques under certain conditions, present-day fatwas and mosque policies often impose prohibitions shaped by practical and institutional concerns.

Based on this background, two central research questions emerge: **(1) What are the classical jurisprudential views on sleeping in mosques?** **(2) How do contemporary fatwas and mosque regulations reinterpret or modify these views?** The objective of this study is therefore threefold: first, to examine the legal status of sleeping in mosques according to classical Islamic jurisprudence; second, to analyze contemporary fatwas and mosque policies; and third, to compare the extent to which modern prohibitions align with or diverge from the classical tradition.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to both Islamic legal scholarship and the practical management of religious spaces. By employing a library research methodology, this article aims to bridge the textual tradition of fiqh with the lived realities of modern mosque governance, thereby providing nuanced insights for scholars, religious authorities, and mosque administrators.

¹ Abu Zakaria ibn Syaraf Al-Nawawī Muhyiddin, *Al-Majmu' Syarah al-Muhazzab* (Dar al-Fikr, 1997).

² Abū Muhammad Muwafiq al-Dīn Abdullāh bin Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Qudāmah al-Jamā'ī al-Maqdisī al-Dimasqī al-Hanbalī, *Al-Mughnī Li Ibnī Qudāmah* (Maktabah al-Qāhirah, 1968).

³ Ramadan Al Sherbini, "Saudi Arabia: Worshippers Advised against Sleeping at Islam's Holiest Site," Saudi, August 6, 2023.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a **qualitative library research design** that emphasizes textual analysis rather than empirical fieldwork. The primary objective of this method is to explore how Islamic jurisprudence and contemporary fatwas conceptualize the permissibility or prohibition of sleeping in mosques. A descriptive-analytical approach is adopted to systematically interpret relevant texts, identify legal patterns, and compare them with modern religious and institutional policies.

The data for this research are derived from both **primary** and **secondary** sources. Primary sources include the *hadith* collections such as *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (ḥadīth no. 750) and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, which document the practices of the Prophet's companions who slept in the mosque. In addition, classical fiqh works, such as al-Nawawī's *al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muḥadḍḥab* (d. 1277), Ibn Qudāmah's *al-Mughnī* (d. 1223), and al-Qurtubī's *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, provide jurisprudential discussions regarding the permissibility of sleeping in mosques and the ethical considerations surrounding it. Secondary sources comprise contemporary fatwas issued by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, and international fatwa councils, as well as scholarly books and journal articles on mosque governance and Islamic social norms.^{4,5} Media reports and policy documents, such as mosque regulations in Saudi Arabia⁶ and Indonesia, are also utilized to capture contemporary institutional practices.

Data collection was carried out by consulting authoritative Arabic texts, digital repositories, and official fatwa portals, with inclusion criteria focusing on materials that explicitly address mosque etiquette, jurisprudence on sleeping in mosques, or relevant institutional policies. Popular writings lacking references to authoritative Islamic sources were excluded.

The analysis follows the principles of **content analysis**⁷ conducted through three steps. First, the identification of textual references related to sleeping in mosques was undertaken. Second, the extracted materials were classified into legal categories—permissible (*mubāḥ*), discouraged (*makrūh*), or prohibited (*ḥarām*)—along with contextual conditions. Third, a comparative analysis was applied to examine points of continuity and divergence between classical jurisprudential positions and modern fatwas or policies.

⁴ Andrew Wheatcroft, "The Heart of Islam," in *Arabia and the Gulf* (2019), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315829128-4>; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Toward the Heart of Things," in *Parabola*, vol. 24, no. 1, preprint, 1999; Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Muzaffar Iqbal, "The Islamic Perspective on The Environmental Crisis Seyyed," *Islam & Science* 5, no. 1 (2007).

⁵ Abdullah Saeed, *Islamic Thought: An Introduction*, in *Islamic Thought: An Introduction* (2006), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203015247>.

⁶ Al Sherbini, "Saudi Arabia: Worshippers Advised against Sleeping at Islam's Holiest Site."

⁷ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis An Introduction to Its Methodology*, 3rd ed. (SAGE Publications India, 2013); A. Bowen, Glenn, "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method," *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (2009).

To ensure the validity and reliability of findings, triangulation was employed by cross-checking arguments across different *madhāhib*, juxtaposing classical sources with contemporary fatwas, and confirming interpretations with peer-reviewed academic studies. Citations were verified against the original Arabic texts where possible, thereby strengthening the scholarly rigor of this research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Classical Jurisprudential Perspectives

In classical Islamic tradition, the mosque was not only regarded as a sacred space for ritual worship but also as a center of social and educational life. This broader function is evident in several hadith reports that indicate some of the Prophet's companions slept or resided temporarily in the mosque. One well-known group was *Ahl al-Ṣuffah*, a community of poor companions who lived in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina for the purpose of learning and worship. A narration from Ibn 'Umar, for instance, records that he used to sleep in the mosque during his youth (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Ṣalāh, ḥadīth no. 442). Such reports demonstrate that sleeping in the mosque was not considered inherently prohibited but rather accepted as long as proper etiquette (*adab*) was maintained.

صحيح البخاري ٤٢١: حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي نَافِعٌ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَنَامُ وَهُوَ شَابٌّ أَعَزَبُ لَا أَهْلَ لَهُ فِي مَسْجِدِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
Musaddad narrated to us, saying: Yahya narrated to us from 'Ubaidullah, who said: Nafi' narrated to me, saying: 'Abdullah bin 'Umar informed me that he used to sleep in the mosque of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) when he was a young unmarried man and had no family.⁸

سنن النسائي ٧١٤: أَخْبَرَنَا عُْبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي نَافِعٌ عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَنَامُ وَهُوَ شَابٌّ أَعَزَبُ لَا أَهْلَ لَهُ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي مَسْجِدِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

He ('Ubaidullah bin Sa'id) informed us, saying: Yahya narrated to us from 'Ubaidullah, who said: Nafi' informed me from Ibn 'Umar that he used to sleep — and he was a young unmarried man with no family — during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) in the Prophet's Mosque.⁹

⁸ Muhammad bin Isma'il al-Bukhari, *Shahih Al-Bukhari* (Mauqi' Wizarah al-Auqaf al-Misriyyah, n.d.).

⁹ Imam An Nasai, *Sunan Al-Nasai* (Dar al-Fikr, 1995).

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ غَيْلَانَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ أَحْبَرَنَا مَعْمَرٌ عَنْ الزُّهْرِيِّ عَنْ سَالِمٍ عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ كُنَّا نَنَامُ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ وَنَحْنُ شَبَابٌ قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى حَدِيثُ ابْنِ عُمَرَ حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ وَقَدْ رَخَّصَ قَوْمٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْعِلْمِ فِي النَّوْمِ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ لَا يَتَّخِذُهُ مَبِيتًا وَلَا مَقِيلًا وَقَوْمٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْعِلْمِ ذَهَبُوا إِلَى قَوْلِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ

Mahmud bin Ghailan narrated to us, saying: ‘Abdurrazzaq narrated to us, saying: Ma‘mar informed us from Az-Zuhri, from Salim, from Ibn ‘Umar, who said that during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), they used to sleep in the mosque when they were still young. Abu ‘Isa (at-Tirmidhi) said that this hadith of Ibn ‘Umar is of *hasan sahih* (good and authentic) grade, and some scholars allowed sleeping in the mosque. Ibn ‘Abbas, however, said, “Do not make it (the mosque) a place for taking naps or for sleeping at night,” and some scholars adopted the opinion of Ibn ‘Abbas in this regard.¹⁰

سنن ابن ماجه ٧٤٣: حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ مَنْصُورٍ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُمَيَّرٍ أَنبَأَنَا عُبيدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ عَنْ نَافِعٍ عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ كُنَّا نَنَامُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Ishaq bin Mansur narrated to us, saying: ‘Abdullah bin Numayr narrated to us, saying: ‘Ubaidullah bin ‘Umar informed us from Nafi’, from Ibn ‘Umar, who said: “During the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), we used to sleep in the mosque.”¹¹

سند أحمد ٥١٣٣: حَدَّثَنَا سَكَنُ بْنُ نَافِعٍ الْبَاهِلِيُّ أَبُو الْحَسَنِ حَدَّثَنَا صَالِحُ بْنُ أَبِي الْأَخْضَرِ عَنْ الزُّهْرِيِّ عَنْ سَالِمِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ كُنْتُ أَعْرَبُ شَابًّا أَيْتُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فِي عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَكَانَتْ الْكِلَابُ تُقْبِلُ وَتُذْبِرُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَلَمْ يَكُونُوا يَرُسُّونَ شَيْئًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ Sakan bin Nafi’ al-Bahili Abu al-Hasan narrated to us, saying: Salih bin Abi al-Akhḍar narrated to us from Az-Zuhri, from Salim bin ‘Abdullah, from his father, who said: “When I was a young unmarried man during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), I used to sleep in the mosque at night, and dogs would often come and go in and out of the mosque, yet the Companions did not sprinkle even a drop of water (to purify the place) because of them.”¹²

سنن ابن ماجه ٧٤٣: حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ مَنْصُورٍ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُمَيَّرٍ أَنبَأَنَا عُبيدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ عَنْ نَافِعٍ عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ كُنَّا نَنَامُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

¹⁰ Muhammad bin Isâ bin Surah bin Musâ al-Dhahâk al-Tirmidzî, *Al-Jâmi’ al-Shahîh Wa Huwa Sunan Tirmidzî* (Dâr al-Hadits, 2005).

¹¹ Al-Hafizh Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Mazid, *Sunan Ibnu Majah* (Maktabah Ilmiah, 2022).

¹² Abu Abdillâh Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal bin Hilal bin Asad Al-Syaibani, *Musnad Al-Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal* (Muasasah ar-Risalah, 2001).

Ishaq bin Mansur narrated to us, saying: ‘Abdullah bin Numayr narrated to us, saying: ‘Ubaidullah bin ‘Umar informed us from Nafi’, from Ibn ‘Umar, who said that during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), they used to sleep in the mosque.”¹³

ند أحمد ٤٣٧٨ : حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ إِدْرِيسَ أَخْبَرَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ عَنْ نَافِعٍ عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ كُنَّا فِي زَمَنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَنَامُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ نَقِيلُ فِيهِ وَنَحْنُ شَبَابٌ

Ibn Idris narrated to us, saying: ‘Ubaidullah informed us from Nafi’, from Ibn ‘Umar, who said that during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), they used to sleep and rest in the mosque, and at that time they were still young.”¹⁴

The jurists of the four Sunni schools (*madhāhib*) offered nuanced interpretations regarding this issue. According to the **Shāfi‘ī school**, sleeping in mosques is permissible, especially for those in retreat (*i’tikāf*) or those without fixed residences. Al-Nawawī, in *al-Majmū‘ Sharḥ al-Muḥadḍḥab*, affirms that there is no prohibition, though he stresses the importance of preserving cleanliness and decorum. Similarly, the **Hanbalī school** adopts a permissive stance, as articulated by Ibn Qudāmah in *al-Mughnī*, but considers it disliked (*makrūh*) if undertaken without necessity.

(الرابعة) يجوز النوم في المسجد ولا كراهة فيه عندنا، نص عليه الشافعي رحمه الله في الأم واتفق عليه الأصحاب، وقال ابن المنذر في الأشراف: رخص في النوم في المسجد ابن المسيب وعطاء والحسن والشافعي . وقال ابن عباس : لاتتخذوه مرقدا: وروي عنه إن كنت تنام للصلاة فلا بأس . وقال الأوزاعي يكره النوم في المسجد. وقال مالك : لا بأس بذلك للغرباء ولأرى ذلك للحاضر. وقال أحمد وإسحاق : إن كان مسافرا أو شبهه فلا بأس ، وإن اتخذه مقيلا فلا. وقال البيهقي في السنن الكبير: روي عن ابن مسعود وابن عباس ومجاهد وسعيد بن جبير ما يدل على كراهيتهم النوم في المسجد. اهـ

It is permissible to sleep in the mosque and it is not considered *makruh* (disliked) according to us—the Shafi‘iyyah—as explained by Imam al-Shafi‘i in his book *al-Umm*, and this view was agreed upon by his followers. Ibn al-Mundhir stated in *al-Ashraf*: “Ibn al-Musayyib, ‘Aṭā’, al-Hasan, and al-Shafi‘i regarded sleeping in the mosque as something lenient (permissible).” Ibn ‘Abbas said: “There is no harm in doing so for a traveler, but not for one who is residing (in the town).” Ahmad and Ishaq said: “If one is traveling or in a similar condition, there is no problem with it, but if he makes it like a lodging place, then no!” Al-Bayhaqi mentioned in *as-Sunan al-Kabir*: “We have

¹³ Abu ‘Abdillah Muhammad ibn Yazid al-Quzwaini Ibn Majah, *Sunan Ibn Majah* (Dar Ihya’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyyah, 2013).

¹⁴ Al-Syaibani, *Musnad Al-Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal*.

narrated from Ibn Mas‘ud, Ibn ‘Abbas, Mujahid, and Sa‘id bin Jubayr that they considered sleeping in the mosque to be *makruh* (disliked).”¹⁵

The **Hanafi school**, however, takes a more cautious approach, classifying sleeping in the mosque as *makrūh* when done without legitimate reason. Exceptions are made for travelers or those performing *i‘tikāf*. The **Mālikī school** is relatively more restrictive, discouraging residents of a town from sleeping in mosques unless under exceptional circumstances, such as necessity or devotional purposes.

Taken together, classical jurisprudence does not establish a categorical prohibition on sleeping in mosques. Rather, the emphasis lies on **ethical considerations**: avoiding impurity, maintaining the mosque’s sanctity, refraining from disturbing others, and preventing the mosque from being used as permanent lodging. Thus, the classical consensus may be summarized as one of conditional permissibility, shaped by intention, necessity, and respect for the sanctity of the mosque.

Contemporary Fatwas

In contemporary Islamic thought, the permissibility of sleeping in mosques has been revisited by religious organizations and fatwa councils in light of changing social contexts, urbanization, and institutional mosque management. While classical jurisprudence tended to adopt a permissive stance conditioned by etiquette, contemporary fatwas demonstrate a more contextualized approach that balances religious tradition with practical considerations such as cleanliness, order, and security.

س: يقول السائل: ما حكم النوم في المسجد (1) ج: النوم في المسجد لا حرج فيه، ولا بأس به، هي بيوت الله أقيمت للعبادة، والنوم لا ينافي ذلك، فقد يكون النوم عبادة إذا أريد به التقوي على عبادة الله، وقد نام الصحابة في مسجد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، ونام علي رضي الله عنه في المسجد لما صار بينه وبين زوجته بعض الشيء، فجاءه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فأيقظه، فقال له: «قم أبا تراب، قم أبا تراب (2)» لما رأى التراب عليه، وكان ابن عمر رضي الله عنه ينام في المسجد بعض الأحيان، فالحاصل أنه لا حرج في ذلك.¹⁶

مطلب في النوم في المسجد فهل يجوز أم لا إلخ (سئل) في النوم هل هو جائز في المسجد وإذا قلت بالاجواز فهل يجوز إخراج الريح فيه أو لا؟. (أجاب) لا بأس في النوم في المسجد لغير الجنب ولو

¹⁵ Abū Zakariā Muhyi al-Dīn Yahyā bin Syaraf al-Nawāwī, *Kitāb Al-Majmū’ Syarh Al-Muhazzab Li al-Shirāzī* (Dār Ihyā ‘al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1995).

¹⁶ Abdul al-Aziz bin Abdullah Ibn Baz, *Fatwa Nur ‘ala al-Darb*, ed. Muhammad Saad al-Syu’uri (Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiah, 1420).

غير أعزب فقد ثبت أن أصحاب الصفة رضي الله تعالى عنه كانوا ينامون في زمنه صلى الله عليه وسلم ولم ينكر عليهم ما لم يضيق على المصلين أو يشوش عليهم، ولا يحرم إخراج الريح في المسجد لكن الأولى اجتنابه؛ لأن الملائكة تتأذى به، والله تعالى أعلم.¹⁷

وعلى هذا الحكم جمهور العلماء، وإن كان ابن مسعود كره النوم في المسجد مطلقاً، وسئل ابن عباس عن المبيت بالمسجد فقال: إن كان الحاجة كالغريب الذي لا أهل له أو الفقير الذي لا بيت له إذا كان يبيت بمقدار الحاجة ثم ينتقل فلا بأس وأما من اتخذ مبيتاً ومقيلاً فينهى عن ذلك، والإمام مالك أباح النوم في المسجد لمن ليس له مسكن، أما من له مسكن فيكره نومه في المسجد. والخلاصة أن النوم في المسجد ليس بحرام، ولكنه مكروه لغير حاجة، فإن كانت هناك حاجة سواء أكانت دائمة أو مؤقتة فلا كراهة "غذاء الألباب للسفاريني ج 2 ص 257".¹⁸

In Indonesia, two major Islamic organizations—**Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)** and **Muhammadiyah**—provide influential interpretations. NU scholars generally allow sleeping in mosques, provided it does not undermine the mosque's primary function as a place of worship. NU's fatwas emphasize the role of *niyyah* (intention): if the purpose of resting in the mosque aligns with devotion, such as during *i'tikāf* or while traveling, then it is permissible. However, using the mosque as a permanent residence is discouraged, as it contradicts its sanctity.

Muhammadiyah adopts a slightly stricter interpretation, stressing that the mosque should not be reduced to a rest area or shelter. Its fatwas highlight the importance of maintaining the mosque's purity and cleanliness, suggesting that sleeping in the mosque should be limited to specific devotional practices. Nonetheless, Muhammadiyah does not prohibit it absolutely, recognizing the historical precedent set by the Prophet's companions.

Beyond Indonesia, international fatwa bodies also weigh in on this matter. **IslamOnline**, under the influence of scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, permits sleeping in mosques when accompanied by proper etiquette and necessity. **Al-Azhar** scholars similarly maintain that there is no absolute prohibition, but mosque authorities are entitled to regulate the practice for administrative and hygienic reasons.

The shift in emphasis from jurisprudential permissibility to administrative regulation reveals an adaptation of Islamic law to contemporary realities. Whereas classical scholars approached the issue largely from the standpoint of *fiqh al-'ibādāt* (jurisprudence of worship), modern fatwas increasingly engage with *fiqh al-waqi'* (jurisprudence of contemporary realities).

¹⁷ Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Syaraf al-Din al-Syafii al-Qadiri, *Fatawa Al-Khalil 'ala al-Mazhab al-Syafii* (Thaba'ah Mishriah Qadimah, 1147).

¹⁸ Dar al-Ifta al-Mishriah, *Fatawa Dar Al-Ifta al-Mishriah* (Dar al-Fikr, 2009).

This reflects an epistemological movement from a strictly textual reliance toward a pragmatic framework that incorporates social and institutional needs.

Modern Mosque Policies

In addition to fatwas, practical mosque regulations play a crucial role in shaping contemporary practices regarding sleeping within mosque premises. These policies are often formulated not solely on jurisprudential grounds but also in response to administrative, hygienic, and security concerns.

In **Saudi Arabia**, the two holiest mosques—Masjid al-Ḥarām in Mecca and Masjid al-Nabawī in Medina—strictly prohibit worshippers from sleeping within the main prayer areas. Reports from the Saudi authorities indicate that such prohibitions are implemented to preserve the sanctity of these sites, ensure cleanliness, and manage the massive influx of pilgrims.¹⁹ Security considerations, such as preventing overcrowding and safeguarding visitors, also underpin these restrictions.

In **Indonesia**, the largest mosque, **Masjid Istiqlal** in Jakarta, enforces similar regulations. Sleeping inside the mosque is generally not allowed outside of specific devotional contexts, such as *i'tikāf* during Ramadan. The mosque administration emphasizes that Istiqlal is a house of worship rather than a dormitory or shelter. However, exceptions are occasionally made for travelers and religious events, where resting in designated areas is permitted.

Smaller urban mosques in Indonesia demonstrate greater variation. Some community mosques completely prohibit sleeping inside, citing concerns about cleanliness and security. Others allow limited rest, particularly for travelers, students, or individuals engaging in late-night prayers.

Overall, these modern policies reveal a trend toward stricter regulation, motivated less by jurisprudential prohibitions than by institutional management. The contrast between permissive classical jurisprudence and restrictive modern regulations highlights the shifting role of mosques in contemporary Muslim societies, where sacred space is increasingly intertwined with administrative governance.

Synthesis: Classical, Contemporary, and Modern Perspectives

The comparative analysis of classical jurisprudence, contemporary fatwas, and modern mosque policies reveals a significant evolution in how the practice of sleeping in mosques is understood and regulated. **Classical jurists** across the Sunni schools generally adopted a permissive stance, emphasizing conditional allowance grounded in etiquette (*adab*) and devotional intent.

¹⁹ Al Sherbini, “Saudi Arabia: Worshippers Advised against Sleeping at Islam’s Holiest Site.”

Their focus was primarily on safeguarding the sanctity of the mosque while recognizing its function as a communal refuge.

In contrast, **contemporary fatwas** reflect a contextual reinterpretation. Organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, and Al-Azhar maintain that sleeping in mosques is not inherently prohibited but stress that the practice should be regulated according to intention, need, and the preservation of mosque cleanliness. This represents a shift from a purely jurisprudential lens toward one informed by socio-religious realities.

Finally, **modern mosque policies**—particularly in Saudi Arabia and major Indonesian mosques—tend toward stricter regulation, driven by practical considerations of hygiene, security, and crowd management. These institutional rules often restrict sleeping more than classical law or contemporary fatwas, illustrating the growing role of administrative governance in defining mosque practices.

Taken together, the results demonstrate a trajectory from jurisprudential permissibility toward administrative restriction, highlighting the dynamic interplay between Islamic law, fatwa authority, and modern institutional management.

Extended Perspectives on Sleeping in Mosques

Beyond jurisprudential debates and institutional fatwas, the practice of sleeping in mosques can also be analyzed through broader historical, sociological, and cross-cultural perspectives. These perspectives provide a more comprehensive understanding of why the issue remains relevant in contemporary Muslim societies and how different communities interpret the role of mosques in accommodating worshippers and the wider public.

Historically, mosques in the Islamic world were embedded in networks of hospitality and communal care. In regions such as Central Asia, North Africa, and the Ottoman Empire, mosques frequently operated alongside caravanserais, *madrasahs*, and *zāwiyahs*, creating integrated religious complexes that provided shelter for travelers, students, and ascetics. In these contexts, sleeping in mosques was not merely a tolerated act but part of a broader system of charitable endowments (*waqf*) designed to meet the needs of the community. The endowment system ensured that mosques had financial resources for maintenance, including accommodation for visitors. This historical function complicates modern prohibitions, suggesting that mosque hospitality was once a normative feature of Islamic civilization.

Anthropological studies of contemporary Muslim societies reveal diverse local practices. In rural parts of Indonesia and Malaysia, smaller community mosques often remain open to travelers, reflecting traditional hospitality values. Such mosques provide mats, ablution facilities, and sometimes even food, reinforcing the perception that the mosque belongs to the *ummah* rather

than being a restricted institutional facility. Conversely, in urban settings such as Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Cairo, the high volume of visitors has pressured mosque administrations to impose regulations. Security concerns, sanitation issues, and misuse of mosque facilities have led to stricter enforcement of prohibitions, often in contrast to rural practices where communal trust is higher.

Another dimension involves the relationship between sleeping in mosques and **Sufi traditions**. In many regions, particularly South Asia, Sufi lodges (*khānqāhs*) and mosques overlap in function. Devotees frequently engage in overnight vigils, spiritual retreats (*i'tikāf*), and communal gatherings that involve extended stays within mosque premises. Historical records show that Sufi saints encouraged disciples to remain in mosques for both worship and rest, interpreting this as a means of spiritual discipline. This heritage continues in parts of Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, where sleeping in mosques or adjacent shrines is associated with religious devotion. The persistence of such practices illustrates that the prohibition of sleeping in mosques is far from universal and depends on theological orientation as well as local culture.

In the Middle East, variations are equally notable. While Saudi Arabia enforces strict prohibitions in its two holy mosques, countries such as Egypt and Turkey adopt more nuanced approaches. In Egypt, Al-Azhar-associated mosques occasionally allow students of religious sciences to remain overnight, especially during examination periods or Ramadan. In Turkey, particularly in Anatolian towns, local mosques may serve as temporary shelters during natural disasters, reaffirming their communal role. These examples highlight that the regulation of mosque sleeping is not merely a matter of jurisprudence but also of socio-political priorities and cultural traditions.

From a global comparative perspective, similar dynamics can be observed in other religious traditions. Christian churches, Buddhist temples, and Hindu ashrams have historically provided shelter to travelers and ascetics. In medieval Europe, monasteries and cathedrals offered lodging for pilgrims journeying to holy sites such as Santiago de Compostela or Canterbury. In Japan, Buddhist temples sometimes still provide accommodation for pilgrims, known as *shukubō*. The comparison underscores that religious architecture across traditions has often combined sacred and communal functions, including shelter. The gradual separation of religious and social functions in modern institutions may therefore be seen as part of a broader global trend of religious spaces adapting to bureaucratic and administrative logics.

The sociology of religion provides further analytical insights. Émile Durkheim emphasized that religious institutions function to reinforce social cohesion, while Peter Berger argued that religion provides a “sacred canopy” that structures communal life. Applying these theories, one could argue that sleeping in mosques historically reinforced communal bonds and collective identity. The decline of this practice in modern times may reflect the increasing privatization of

religious experience, where worship is separated from daily life and regulated by institutional authority. This tension raises critical questions about the future role of mosques: should they remain multifunctional communal centers, or should they evolve into specialized spaces devoted solely to ritual worship?

The implications of these extended perspectives are significant for contemporary mosque governance. They suggest that prohibiting sleeping in mosques cannot be justified solely on jurisprudential grounds but must also take into account cultural heritage, communal needs, and broader social functions. For instance, in disaster-prone areas, mosques often become natural shelters, as observed in Aceh after the 2004 tsunami, where mosques served both as places of refuge and as symbols of resilience. Restricting the communal role of mosques in such contexts may undermine their ability to serve as centers of solidarity and relief. On the other hand, completely open access may expose mosques to challenges of maintenance, misuse, or even security threats, especially in highly populated urban areas.

Thus, the synthesis of jurisprudential, historical, and sociological findings suggests that sleeping in mosques should be viewed as a practice situated along a spectrum of meanings and functions. At one end lies the classical permissibility grounded in scriptural precedent and communal hospitality; at the other lies modern restriction shaped by administrative governance and institutional priorities. Between these poles, diverse local practices and cultural traditions demonstrate that the issue remains fluid and adaptable. Rather than framing it as a binary of prohibition versus permissibility, scholars and administrators may benefit from adopting a contextual approach that respects both the sanctity of the mosque and the communal needs of its users.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate a clear trajectory in the treatment of sleeping in mosques, moving from conditional permissibility in classical jurisprudence, through contextual reinterpretations in contemporary fatwas, to stricter administrative regulations in modern mosque policies. This trajectory underscores the adaptive nature of Islamic law, which continuously negotiates between textual tradition, scholarly reasoning, and the practical demands of religious institutions. In the classical period, jurists across the four major Sunni schools did not issue categorical prohibitions against sleeping in mosques. Instead, they allowed the practice under certain conditions, emphasizing the importance of maintaining cleanliness, avoiding disturbance to others, and ensuring that the mosque was not used as a permanent residence. Their reasoning was based on textual evidence, particularly hadith reports about *Ahl al-Ṣuffah* and Ibn ʿUmar, which

illustrate that sleeping in mosques was historically accepted when performed with proper etiquette and intention.

Contemporary fatwas, while generally aligned with this permissive stance, introduce new layers of consideration shaped by modern realities. Organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Al-Azhar maintain that sleeping in mosques is not inherently prohibited, but they highlight issues such as hygiene, order, and the evolving function of mosques in urban societies. These fatwas demonstrate a methodological shift from *fiqh al-‘ibādāt*, which focuses narrowly on worship, toward *fiqh al-waqi‘*, which takes into account social, cultural, and institutional circumstances. Thus, while the classical consensus emphasizes jurisprudential allowance, contemporary fatwas reflect an effort to contextualize those rulings within present-day conditions, striking a balance between textual permissibility and practical regulation.

This shift can be further understood through the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, or the higher objectives of Islamic law. The principle of preserving religion (*hifẓ al-dīn*) is upheld by ensuring that mosques remain primarily places of worship rather than dormitories. Preserving life (*hifẓ al-naḥs*) is reflected in efforts to protect worshippers’ health and safety, particularly in large congregations where overcrowding poses risks. The principle of preserving wealth and resources (*hifẓ al-māl*) is evident in policies that protect mosque facilities from misuse or damage. Viewed through this lens, modern restrictions on sleeping in mosques are not contradictions of classical jurisprudence but rather contextual adaptations that continue to fulfill the higher purposes of Islamic law.

From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the growing role of mosque administrations as key actors in defining and regulating sacred space. Unlike early Islamic mosques, which were multifunctional institutions, modern mosques—especially in urban contexts—face increasing pressures related to cleanliness, security, and crowd management. This explains why institutions such as Masjid al-Ḥarām and Masjid al-Nabawī strictly prohibit sleeping, despite classical jurisprudence allowing it. Similarly, Masjid Istiqlal in Indonesia permits sleeping only during specific devotional practices such as *i’tikāf*, underscoring the shift from jurisprudential permissibility to administrative governance. Smaller mosques demonstrate varying approaches, reflecting the flexibility and diversity of Muslim communities in interpreting and implementing mosque etiquette.

وينبغي لمن أراد النوم في المسجد أن يراعي أموراً منها: ألا يعتاد النوم فيه، وأن يجعل ذلك مقصوداً على قدر الحاجة خروجاً من الخلاف في المسألة، ومنها: ألا يكون في نومه أذية للمصلين بأي نوع من أنواع الإيذاء، إذ المسجد جُعل للصلاة أصلاً، وحق المصلين في العبادة مقدم، ومنها: ألا ينام

على هيئة قد تنكشف فيها عورته أو على هيئة مستهجنة عرفاً، بل يجعل نومه في مؤخرة المسجد، ومراعاة الأعراف التي لا تُخالف الشرع من الأمور المعتمدة عند أهل العلم.²⁰

وقد تقدم أن النوم في المسجد جائز للضرورة بغير خلاف، ومنه نوم المعتكف لضرورة صحة اعتكافه، ولغير ضرورة عند الأكثرين، والنوم مظنة خروج الحدث، فلو منع من خروج الريح في المسجد لمنع من النوم فيه بكل حال، وهو مخالف للنصوص والإجماع" انتهى.²¹

Academically, this study contributes to Islamic jurisprudence and religious studies by demonstrating how legal rulings evolve in dialogue with social realities. The apparent tension between permissive classical rulings and restrictive modern policies does not represent a rupture but a continuum shaped by necessity. By situating the discussion within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, the study illustrates the adaptability of Islamic law in balancing timeless principles with changing contexts. This adaptability is a key feature of Islamic jurisprudence, allowing it to remain relevant across different times and places while maintaining fidelity to its core objectives.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the regulation of sleeping in mosques is not a static matter of jurisprudential interpretation but a dynamic process influenced by historical precedents, contemporary fatwas, and modern institutional governance. Classical jurists generally adopted a permissive approach, allowing sleeping in mosques under conditions of necessity and proper etiquette. Their reasoning was rooted in prophetic traditions and historical practices such as the presence of *Ahl al-Ṣuffah* in the Prophet's Mosque. This demonstrates that early Islamic law conceptualized mosques not only as spaces for ritual devotion but also as centers of community life where social and spiritual needs intersected.

حكم النوم في المسجد المسجد من أحكامه: أنه لا بأس من النوم فيه. لأن هذه لا بد أن نعرفها؛ لكن لا يتخذ المسجد مقهى ولا فندقاً ولا سكناً للنوم. لكن يجوز للحاجة: كأن أتى غريب، ولم يجد ما يمكنه من النوم خارج المسجد. فنقول: إن من أعوزه المبيت فله أن ينام في المسجد بشرط ألا يجد مكاناً آخر.²²

Contemporary fatwas, however, illustrate an adaptation of this jurisprudential heritage to modern realities. Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, as well as Al-Azhar and other institutions, have not departed fundamentally from classical permissibility but emphasize regulation in the interest of cleanliness, order, and the preservation of mosque sanctity. This methodological shift

²⁰ Lajnah al-Fatawa bi al-Syubkah al-Islamiah, *Fatawa Al-Syubkiah al-Islamiah* (Dar al-Fikr, 2009).

²¹ Muhammad Sholih al-Munajjid, *Al-Qasm al-'Arabi Min Mawqiu (Al-Islam, Sual Wa Jawab)* (Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiah, 1430).

²² A'idh bin Abdullah al-Qarni, *Durus Al-Syaikh 'Aidh al-Qarni* (Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyah, 2015).

reflects the move from *fiqh al-‘ibādāt* to *fiqh al-waqi‘*, where rulings are contextualized within present social realities. Rather than rejecting classical jurisprudence, contemporary scholars reinterpret it through the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, particularly the protection of religion, life, and resources. The objectives of law thus provide a bridge between timeless principles and evolving social contexts.

The role of mosque administrations in shaping practice is especially significant. In highly urbanized settings, mosques have become subject to bureaucratic management and administrative regulations. Restrictions on sleeping, such as those in Masjid al-Ḥarām or Masjid Istiqlal, stem less from theological prohibition than from concerns of hygiene, crowd control, and security. This reflects a broader transformation in the function of mosques from multifunctional community hubs to specialized ritual spaces. While such regulation may ensure order, it also risks narrowing the communal role of the mosque, raising questions about the balance between sanctity and accessibility.

From a sociological perspective, this shift mirrors global patterns in religious spaces across traditions. Churches, temples, and shrines that once offered shelter are now increasingly regulated by institutional authorities. The transformation highlights the tension between the historical role of sacred spaces as communal sanctuaries and their modern status as bureaucratically managed institutions. The sociology of religion suggests that this transition may weaken the integrative role of mosques in fostering communal solidarity, as practices once seen as extensions of worship are redefined as administrative concerns.

This study therefore contributes to understanding the adaptability of Islamic law and the shifting functions of mosques in contemporary Muslim societies. It highlights that the issue is not merely legal but also cultural, social, and institutional. Future research should examine how congregants perceive these regulations and whether they view them as legitimate applications of *fiqh* or as limitations imposed by bureaucratic governance. Empirical studies across different contexts would enrich the academic discourse by situating jurisprudential debates within lived experiences.

Future research should extend beyond library-based analysis to include empirical fieldwork that examines how worshippers perceive and respond to these regulations. Investigating community perspectives across diverse mosque settings—urban, rural, and international—would provide valuable insights into whether congregants regard sleeping restrictions as legitimate extensions of *fiqh* or as administrative overreach. Comparative studies across Muslim-majority societies could also shed light on how cultural, political, and institutional factors shape the regulation of mosque etiquette. Such studies would enrich our understanding of the interplay between classical

jurisprudence, contemporary fatwas, and modern governance, highlighting the dynamic and living nature of Islamic law.

Several mosques in Indonesia have embraced the concept of being “pilgrim-friendly” or “community-friendly” by providing resting and lodging facilities for travelers (*musafir*). Among them are Masjid Jami KH Muhammad Sadjid in Tenggarong, East Kalimantan, which offers well-equipped rooms for travelers and programs to empower the poor, such as providing rice containers for those in need. Masjid Asy Syfa at RSUD Moewardi in Surakarta, Central Java, has an open lodging area for the public, complete with visitor registration to ensure comfort and security. Masjid Pemuda Konsulat in Surabaya, East Java, became widely known for its generosity in offering free sleeping mats and meals for anyone in need. Masjid Al-Irsyad in Yogyakarta is recognized as a traveler-friendly mosque that welcomes people from all backgrounds to rest and worship. Meanwhile, Masjid Al-Falah in Sragen, Central Java, provides mattresses and pillows for weary worshippers to rest comfortably, often free of charge or at very low cost. These mosques reflect the spirit of compassion, hospitality, and community service that lies at the heart of Islam, showing how mosques can serve not only as places of worship but also as sanctuaries of care and solidarity.

Many mosques have cash balances reaching into the billions, yet they often lack empathy and warmth toward their own congregants. Countless poor and needy individuals feel neglected by their fellow believers—both in terms of economic welfare and spiritual well-being. There are also many Muslims who simply wish to rest their bodies for a while, burdened by family problems or overwhelming financial pressures. Naturally, the mosque should be a place of comfort and refuge, yet many mosques close their doors and forbid people from sleeping inside without offering any concrete solutions.

The writer suggests making mosques more welcoming to their congregations by providing designated spaces for travelers (*musafir*) or Muslims who genuinely need temporary accommodation in the mosque. This approach is considered better than the current situation, in which many mosques focus on accumulating large cash balances that are publicly announced every Friday.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the prohibition of sleeping in mosques is rooted in complex interactions between Islamic jurisprudence and contemporary institutional practices. From the perspective of classical fiqh, sleeping in mosques is not categorically forbidden; it is generally permissible under certain circumstances such as i'tikāf, travel, or necessity. However, discussions in fiqh literature also emphasize the importance of preserving the sanctity, cleanliness, and primary function of the mosque as a place of worship. Contemporary fatwas and mosque management

policies, by contrast, often adopt a more restrictive stance, reflecting modern concerns about order, maintenance, and public perception of mosques as sacred spaces.

The findings highlight a dynamic tension between normative religious rulings and the practical governance of mosques in today's context. This tension illustrates how religious authorities and mosque administrators reinterpret traditional jurisprudence in light of contemporary needs. Academically, this research contributes to the broader study of how sacred spaces are regulated in Islam, offering insights into the negotiation between scriptural permissibility and socio-institutional adaptation. Future research may further explore comparative practices across different regions, as well as the sociological impact of these prohibitions on congregational life and perceptions of the mosque's role in Muslim communities.

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