10193 - Problem of cell phones ringing in the mosque

the question

Cell phone while they are good but when people bring them to the mosque and do not turn them off, start ringing during the prayers. It is very anoying and distracting. Please provide an Islamic ruling on this matter.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Islam is keen that the Muslim’s prayer should be perfect in terms of focus and humility, far removed from anything that may distract a person from prayer. Among the things to which Islam pays attention in this regard are the following:

1 – It was narrated that Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “We used to pray with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) when it was intensely hot. When one of us could not bear to press his face to the ground (because of the heat), he would spread his garment and prostrate on it.”

(Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1150; Muslim, 620).

Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar said:

The apparent meaning is that they did that in order to remove the distraction caused by the ground being too hot.

Fath al-Baari, 1/493

2 – It was narrated from ‘Aa’ishah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed in a shirt on which there were designs, and when he finished praying he said, “Take this shirt of mine to Abu Jahm and bring me the inbijaaniyyah (a woollen garment that was plain, with

no designs) of Abu Jahm, for it distracted me from my prayer." Haashim ibn 'Urwah narrated from his father from 'Aa'ishah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "I used to look at its designs whilst I was praying and I was afraid that it would distract me."

(Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 366; Muslim, 556)

3 – It was narrated from 'Aa'ishah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "If the iqaamah for 'Isha' prayer is given and dinner is ready, then start with dinner."

(Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5148; Muslim, 558)

al-Haafiz said:

al-Faakihaani said: This should be interpreted in general terms, applicable to any situation where there is a distraction that may lead to a person not being sufficiently humble and focused (in prayer).

Fath al-Baari, 2/160

4 – It was narrated that Abu Saalih al-Sammaan said: I saw Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri on a Friday, praying facing something that screened him from the people. A young man from among Bani Abi Mu'eet wanted to pass in front of him, and Abu Sa'eed pushed him in the chest. The young man looked and could not find any way to pass except in front of him, so he tried again, and Abu Sa'eed pushed him more strongly than the first time. The young man insulted Abu Sa'eed and entered upon Marwaan, and complained to him about what Abu Sa'eed had done to him. Abu Sa'eed came in behind him, and Marwaan said to him, "What is the matter with you and your brother's son, O Abu Sa'eed?" He said, "I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say, 'If any one of you is praying facing something that is screening him from the people, and someone wants to pass in front of him, let him push him back, and if he insists then let him fight him, for he is a devil.'"

(Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 487; Muslim, 505)

Al-Zarqaani said: The phrase “for he is a devil” means that he is doing the actions of the Shaytaan, because he is insisting on disturbing someone who is praying.

(Sharh al-Zarqaani, 1/442).

5 – It was narrated that Abu Sa’eed said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) went into i’tikaaf (retreat) in the mosque, and he heard them reciting Qur’aan out loud. He drew back the curtain and said, “Each of you is conversing privately with his Lord, so do not disturb one another or raise your voices above one another when reading Qur’aan – or he said, when praying.”

(Narrated by Abu Dawood, 1332)

We should note in this last hadeeth that the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade the people to distract one another from prayer by their prayer or Qur’aan-reading. He forbade people to distract others from prayer by their prayer or Qur’aan-reading. He did not like the prayer or Qur’aan-reading of one person to distract another person from his prayer.

In conclusion: Islam encourages focus and humility in prayer, and encourages us to persist in that. What we see of these mobile phones in the situation you mention is something that causes people to lose the proper focus and humility in prayer, because it is a disturbance that affects the spirit and tranquility of prayer.

We advise our brothers who own these phones not to leave them switched on at the time of prayer, rather they should turn off the ringer.