10268 - Praying in musallas

the question

Here in the university residence we have several buildings, in which there are musallas (prayer rooms). On each floor there is more than one musalla. Some of the students gather in these musallas and pray in congregation there, even though there is a mosque nearby and they are able to pray there.
Is it permissible to hold the prayers in these musallas, even though there is a mosque nearby?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is obligatory to pray in congregation in the mosque, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded. He thought of burning down the houses of people who did not attend the prayers with him because of their non-attendance. He did not excuse them when they prayed in congregation in their houses, even though there were men and women there with whom they could pray in congregation. Ibn Mas'ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "Pray them [the prayers] where the call to them is given." Neither did he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) give a concession to the blind man to pray in congregation in his house, rather he commanded him to come to the mosque so long as he could hear the call.

So prayer in congregation is obligatory and is enjoined (in Islam). If it were sufficient to pray in congregation in any other place, the blind man and others would have been allowed to pray in congregation in their homes with their children and womenfolk. But he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not allow that.

So these students must go to the houses of Allaah, which has a particular virtue and reward when one goes there and comes back. There is virtue in entering and leaving the mosques and in the dhikr recited at those times. They should not be lazy and neglect gathering in the mosque. Allaah

says (interpretation of the meaning):

“In houses (mosques) which Allaah has ordered to be raised (to be cleaned, and to be honoured), in them His Name is remembered [i.e. Adhaan, Iqaamah, Salaah (prayers), invocations, recitation of the Qur’aan]. Therein glorify Him (Allaah) in the mornings and in the afternoons or the evenings”[al-Noor 24:36]

Moreover, praying in musallas splits the congregations of Muslims, which goes against the aim of sharee’ah, which is for the people of one quarter to gather in one mosque; for the people of many quarters to gather in one Jaami’ (Friday mosque) once a week; for the people of a city to gather in one prayer-place for Eid prayers; and for a huge number of Muslims from all over the world to gather on Hajj. Gathering together brings many benefits, as is well known.

Among the differences between a musalla and a mosque is that the mosque is a waqf (endowment) that lasts until the Hour begins, whereas the location of a musalla may be changed, it may be bought or sold or inherited, and so on. This is unlike a mosque which must remain a mosque so long as the world remains, and which has special virtues which are greater than those of a musalla. So it is prescribed to “greet” the mosque (by praying two rak’ahs), unlike other places.

If there is a mosque nearby, it is obligatory to go there to pray, but if the mosque is far away and the adhaan cannot be heard from afar, then in this case it is permissible to pray in the musallas.

Those who call people to Allaah should be wise and should encourage the students to pray in the mosques without putting them off from praying in congregation altogether. For some ignorant people may give up praying altogether when they see the harshness of some of the daa’iyahs. So we must pay attention to this and call people in a good manner.

May Allaah help us all to do that which He loves and which pleases Him. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions, and grant them peace.