

What Does Islam Say About the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Divine Guidance About Pandemics
Contemporary Fiqhi Issues Regarding
Coronavirus

Dr. Asif Hirani

Preface

All Praise is due to Allah The All-Mighty and All-Encompassing. May peace and blessings be upon His noble Messenger Mohammad (ﷺ).

As COVID-19 has become a global pandemic, the Muslim community faces new, unprecedented Juristic (Fiqhi) and spiritual issues. I decided to write this paper to clarify these issues as there is rampant misinformation and confusion among the global Muslim community. I will include all the famous hadiths about plagues, which we can use as analogies to address the contemporary Fiqhi issues which have surfaced due to the Coronavirus.¹ As a disclaimer, none of the

Fiqhi opinions in this paper are my personal opinion; rather, I have used the scholarly works in covering this topic:

Shaikh Khaleel ur Rehman, Islamabad, Pakistan

Shaikh Saleh bin Abdul Aziz Sindhi, Madina, Saudia

Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammad An-Najjar, Libya

Shaikh Ibrahim bin Amir Ar-Ruhaili, Madina, Saudia

Shaikh Khalid Bin Ali Al-Mushaeqih, Qaseem, Saudia

Dr. Hatem Al-Haj, New Jersey from AMJA

Shaikh Mufti Taqi Uthmani, Karachi, Pakistan

Shaikh Faraz ul Haq ibn Najm ul Haq, Madina, Saudia

I would like to give a special thanks to the above-mentioned scholars, as well as thank my parents, my wife and kids, Shaikh Tofael Nurudin, Dr. Mohammad, Sister Tasnim and Br.Muneeb, all of whom helped me immensely in this work.

¹ For more info, See محاضرات الشيخ صالح سندي: هل كورونا هو الطاعون؟

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Preface

Divine Wisdoms Behind this Pandemic (i.e., Coronavirus)

Is Coronavirus a Punishment from Allah (SWT) to Humanity?

We don't have to reinvent the wheel when the same question was asked to Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) from Aisha (RA) about the plague. She said: I asked about the plague, and the Prophet (ﷺ) responded²:

أَنَّهُ عَذَابٌ يَبْعَثُهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ

"It is a punishment sent by Allah on whom He wants to punish."

وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ جَعَلَهُ رَحْمَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And Allah made it a source of mercy for the believers,"

لَيْسَ مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَقَعُ الطَّاعُونَ، فَيَمُوتُ فِي بَلَدِهِ (فَيَمُوتُ فِي بَيْتِهِ)³ صَابِرًا مُحْتَسِبًا، يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا يُصِيبُهُ إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ، إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ شَهِيدٍ

"If one in the time of an epidemic plague stays in his country (or stay in his house as mentioned in different narration) patiently hoping for Allah's reward and believing that nothing will befall him except what Allah has written for him, then he will get the reward of a martyr."

What do we learn from this statement of the Prophet(ﷺ)?

- 1) To earn that mercy and reward, one must stay in his house or his town and trust the infinite wisdom of Allah (SWT). Even if one doesn't die

² Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 3474

³ Musnad Ahmed has this wording, hadith no. 26139

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from the deadly virus, one will still obtain the reward of a martyr because the hadith doesn't put death as a condition.⁴

- 2) Any plague, including the Coronavirus, can be either a punishment or mercy for someone depending on if one is patient and trusting in Allah (SWT).
- 3) To make plague (or any deadly contagious disease) a source of mercy and reward, one must believe in the Oneness of Allah (SWT) and that all good and bad happens because of Allah's will.
- 4) The hadith also illustrates the importance of being patient during this struggle with Coronavirus. In order to earn Allah's mercy, one should not blame others, and one should seek help in the way that is pleasing to Allah (SWT): taking all preventative measures and seeking medical treatment while believing spiritually that only Allah (SWT) is the One who cures.
- 5) Martyr, in this hadith, means the one whose actions serve as a witness to his patience (by not leaving his house/town) and trust in Allah (SWT).

Why Calamity and adversity comes from an Individual Perspective?

- 1) When one is infected by the Coronavirus, then it is a trial. Allah (SWT) wants to test whether we will practice patience or not?⁵
- 2) It is a sign of love and mercy for a practicing Muslim, as mentioned in the above hadith.⁶
- 3) For some individuals, it is a punishment⁷ and warning.⁸
- 4) Expiations of sins.⁹

⁴ Ibn Hajar, فتح الباري, page 194, volume 10

⁵ Surah Al-Kahf, Ayah 8 & Surah Al-Anam Ayah 165)

⁶ In Sahih Muslim, hadith no. 5646: The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "When Allah loves someone, He puts him/her under difficulty"

⁷ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 3474

⁸ Surah An-Nisa, Ayah: 79, Surah Ash-Shoora, Ayah: 30

⁹ Sunan Tirmidhi, Hadith no. 2399: (Trials will continue to befall the believing man or woman in himself, his child and his wealth until he meets Allaah with no sin on him.)

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- 5) It's a reminder that we should return and repent to him.¹⁰
- 6) Attainment of reward and rise in status.¹¹
- 7) It reminds a person of the great blessings of good health and ease, which most people underestimate.¹²
- 8) For some individuals, it is a source of destroying their ego so they can come back to Allah (SWT) as humble servants¹³.

From the Collective Perspective:

When corruption is widespread throughout humanity, Allah (SWT) sends widespread trials and punishments as a warning and reminder so that humanity can repent and return back to Him. Allah (SWT) says in Surat Al-Rum, Ayah 41:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].”

In addition to trying to protect ourselves physically (self-quarantine, good hygiene, medical treatments, etc.), we should take this plague as a reminder to protect ourselves spiritually by turning back to Allah (SWT).

This is confirmed by the following profound hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar:

أَقْبَلَ عَلَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: " يَا مَعْشَرَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ حَمْسٌ إِذَا ابْتَلَيْتُمْ بِهِنَّ، وَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ تُدْرِكُوهُنَّ:

¹⁰ Surah Al-Araaf, Ayah no. 94, Tafsir Ibn Kasir, page 499, volume 3

¹¹ Sahih Muslim, Hadith no. 2572: (The believer is not harmed by a thorn or anything greater, but Allaah will raise him in status thereby, or erase a sin thereby)

¹² Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 6412

¹³ Ibn Qayyim, زاد المعاد, page 189-195, volume 2

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The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) turned to us and said: ‘O Muhajirun, there are five things with which you will be tested, and I seek refuge with Allah (SWT) lest you live to see them:

لَمْ تَظْهَرِ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي قَوْمٍ قَطُّ، حَتَّى يُعْلِنُوا بِهَا، إِلَّا فَشَا فِيهِمُ الطَّاعُونُ، وَالْأَوْجَاعُ الَّتِي لَمْ تَكُنْ مَصَّتْ فِي أَسْلَافِهِمُ الَّذِينَ مَضَوْا،

1. Immorality never appears among a people to such an extent that they commit it openly, except that plagues and diseases that were never known among the predecessors will spread among them.

وَلَمْ يَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ، إِلَّا أُخِذُوا بِالسِّنِينَ، وَشَدَّةِ الْمَثُونَةِ، وَجَوْرِ السُّلْطَانِ عَلَيْهِمْ،

2. They do not cheat in weights and measures, except that they will be stricken with famine, severe calamity, and the oppression of their rulers.

وَلَمْ يَمْنَعُوا زَكَاةَ أَمْوَالِهِمْ، إِلَّا مَنَعُوا الْقَطْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ، وَلَوْلَا الْبَهَائِمُ لَمْ يُمَطَّرُوا،

3. They do not withhold the Zakah of their wealth, except that rain will be withheld from the sky, and were it not for the animals, no rain would fall on them.

وَلَمْ يَنْقُضُوا عَهْدَ اللَّهِ، وَعَهْدَ رَسُولِهِ، إِلَّا سَلَّطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ عَدُوًّا مِنْ غَيْرِهِمْ، فَأَخَذُوا بَعْضَ مَا فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ،

4. They do not break their covenant with Allah and His Messenger, except that Allah will enable their enemies to overpower them and take some of what is in their hands.

وَمَا لَمْ تَحْكَمْ أَيْمَتُهُمْ بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ، وَيَتَخَبَّرُوا مِمَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ، إِلَّا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ بَأْسَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ

5. Unless their leaders rule according to the Book of Allah and seek all good from that which Allah has revealed, Allah will cause them to fight one another.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Sunan Ibn-Majah, Hadith no. 4019

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This hadith clearly indicates that when immorality, vulgarity, and oppression are widespread, then Allah (SWT) will send a punishment as a reminder and warning for us to repent.

Divine Guidance about Coronavirus:

In this chapter, we will analyze the statements of Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) about diseases and plagues within the current context:

Allah (SWT) has Created Disease Along with its Cure:

- The final Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) said:

مَا أُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ دَاءً إِلَّا أُنْزِلَ لَهُ شِفَاءً¹⁵

"There is no disease that Allah has created, except that he also has created its treatment."

What can we extract from this statement of the Prophet (ﷺ)?

- Allah (SWT), out of His infinite wisdom, has created these diseases to primarily examine and test His servants.
- There is no disease in this world that Allah has created, without creating its appropriate cure. Even though modern medical scientists currently say that there is no cure for coronavirus, As Muslims, we know that this is not true because of the above-mentioned hadith, there is a cure for every disease, but right now, humans are too ignorant to find and too arrogant to accept.¹⁶
- It is a religious responsibility of the Muslim doctors and scientists to keep searching for the cures of all the diseases by doing different experiments as stated by the Prophet (ﷺ) in the above hadith.¹⁷

¹⁵ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 5678

¹⁶ We ask Allah to teach us its cure. Ameen

¹⁷ We had Muslim Doctors like Ar-Razi in the 7th Century and Az-Zahrawi in the 10th Century who invented more than 200 medical instruments some of which are still used today (i.e. forceps and surgical needles). Az-Zahrawi actually wrote an encyclopedia of medicine on 30 volumes named "التصريف". May Allah enable us to revive this legacy. Even though we Muslims believe that these plagues are a kind of punishment for certain people, but to become intellectually lazy from the leadership level and to surrender to it without finding cures and taking precautionary measures was never a habit of our earlier generations.

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- The diseases mentioned in this hadith include contagious diseases such as the Coronavirus.
- The disease mentioned in this hadith includes the contagious diseases that are spread from animals.
- It is not acceptable for a Muslim to surrender to any disease physically, spiritually, or psychologically. We should strive hard to find cures in light of the above-mentioned hadith.¹⁸

Plague (طاعون) is a Contagious Disease Addressed by the Prophet (ﷺ)

Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) said¹⁹:

إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِالطَّاعُونِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا

“When you heard about a plague in any land, then do not enter it.”

وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا

“And if plague outbreaks in your land, then do not leave your land.”

What can we extract from this statement of the Prophet (ﷺ)?

- It's a religious responsibility for all the Muslims to prevent the spread of plague or any other contagious diseases based on the apparent meaning of this hadith.
- Every human life (regardless of their faith) is essential and honored by Allah (SWT), and to protect life is our religious responsibility.²⁰

¹⁸ In the 10th century (Golden age for Muslims) when Az-Zahrawi (a Muslim scientist) was inventing great medical equipment, the Catholic churches were intellectually spreading the message that every disease comes as a punishment from God.

¹⁹ Sahih Al-Bukhari 5728

²⁰ As Allah says in Surat Al-Isra, Ayah 70: “We have honored every son of Adam”.

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- This hadith clearly states that Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) is telling us to practice self-quarantine. This concept is not only based off of modern medical research, but it is a religious obligation rooted in our religion.
- Preventing harm and damage control is one of the pearls of wisdom behind this instruction of self-quarantine from the Prophet (ﷺ).
- One of the other pearls of wisdom from this hadith is to limit the damage to one particular area and to avoid the widespread outbreak of the disease.

How did the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) Deal with Plague?

We will extract lessons from the following hadith after summarizing its text.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: أَنَّ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، خَرَجَ إِلَى الشَّامِ،

'Umar bin Al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him) set out for Ash-Sham (the region comprising Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan).

حَتَّى إِذَا كَانَ بِسَرِغَ لَقِيَهُ أُمَرَاءُ الْأَجْنَادِ أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ بْنُ الْجَرَّاحِ وَأَصْحَابُهُ

As he reached Sargh (a town by the side of Hijaz), he came across the governor of Al-Ajnad, Abu 'Ubaydah bin Al-Jarrah (May Allah be pleased with him) and his companions.

فَأَخْبَرُوهُ أَنَّ الْوَبَاءَ قَدْ وَقَعَ بِأَرْضِ الشَّامِ

They informed him that a plague (epidemic) had broken out in Syria.

قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: فَقَالَ عُمَرُ: ادْعُ لِي الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الْأَوَّلِينَ، فَدَعَاهُمْ فَاسْتَشَارَهُمْ،

Ibn 'Abbas relates: 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) said to me: "Call to me the earliest Muhajirun (Emigrants)." So I called them, and he sought their advice

وَأَخْبَرَهُمْ أَنَّ الْوَبَاءَ قَدْ وَقَعَ بِالشَّامِ، فَاخْتَلَفُوا،

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and told them that an epidemic had broken out in Ash-Sham. There was a difference of opinion whether they (Umar and his companions from Madina) should proceed further in the city or retreat to their homes in such a situation.

فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: قَدْ خَرَجْتَ لِأَمْرٍ، وَلَا نَرَى أَنْ تَرْجِعَ عَنْهُ،

Some of them said: "You have set forth for a matter, and therefore you should not go back;"

وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: مَعَكَ بَقِيَّةُ النَّاسِ وَأَصْحَابُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ،

whereas some of them said: As you have along with you many eminent Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ),

وَلَا نَرَى أَنْ تُقَدِّمَهُمْ عَلَى هَذَا الْوَبَاءِ،

we would not advise you to set forth to the place of the plague (and thus expose them deliberately to a danger).

فَقَالَ: ارْتَفِعُوا عَنِّي،

'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "You can now go away."

ثُمَّ قَالَ: ادْعُوا لِي الْأَنْصَارَ، فَدَعَوْهُمْ

He said: "Call to me the Ansar (the Helpers)." So I called them to him,

فَاسْتَشَارَهُمْ، فَسَلَكُوا سَبِيلَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ، وَاخْتَلَفُوا كَاخْتِلَافِهِمْ،

and he consulted them, and they differed in their opinions as well.

فَقَالَ: ارْتَفِعُوا عَنِّي،

He said: "Now, you may go."

ثُمَّ قَالَ: ادْعُ لِي مَنْ كَانَ هَا هُنَا مِنْ مَشِيخَةِ قُرَيْشٍ مِنْ مُهَاجِرَةِ الْفَتْحِ،

He again said: "Call the old (wise people) of the Quraish who had emigrated before the conquest of Makkah."

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فَدَعَوْهُمْ، فَلَمْ يَخْتَلَفْ مِنْهُمْ عَلَيْهِ رَجُلَانِ

I called them. 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) consulted them in this issue, and not even two persons among them differed in the opinions.

فَقَالُوا: نَرَى أَنْ تَرْجِعَ بِالنَّاسِ وَلَا تُقَدِّمَهُمْ عَلَى هَذَا الْوَبَاءِ،

They said: "We think that you should go back along with the people and do not take them to this scourge

فَنَادَى عُمَرُ فِي النَّاسِ إِنِّي مُصَبِّحٌ عَلَى ظَهْرٍ فَأُصْبِحُوا عَلَيْهِ

'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) made an announcement to the people, saying: "In the morning I intend to go back, and I want you to do the same."

قَالَ أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ بْنُ الْجَرَّاحِ: أَفِرَارًا مِنْ قَدَرِ اللَّهِ؟

Abu 'Ubaydah bin Al-Jarrah (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "Are you going to run away from the Divine Decree?"

فَقَالَ عُمَرُ: لَوْ غَيْرُكَ قَالَهَا يَا أَبَا عُبَيْدَةَ؟

Thereupon 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "O Abu 'Ubaydah! Had it only been someone else to say this." ('Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) did not like to differ with him).

نَعَمْ نَفِرُ مِنْ قَدَرِ اللَّهِ إِلَى قَدَرِ اللَّهِ،

He said: "Yes, we are running from the Divine Decree to the Divine Decree. (Which means that one must put in the effort, but no one can escape death and run away from the decree of Allah (SWT))

(Then he gave this example)

أَرَأَيْتَ لَوْ كَانَ لَكَ إِبِلٌ هَبَطَتْ وَادِيًّا لَهُ عُذُوتَانِ،

What do you think if you have camels and you happen to descend a valley having two sides,

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إِخْدَاهُمَا خَصْبَةً، وَالْأُخْرَى جَدْبَةً،

one of them covered with foliage and the other being barren,

أَلَيْسَ إِنْ رَعَيْتَ الْخَصْبَةَ رَعَيْتَهَا بِقَدَرِ اللَّهِ،

will you not act according to the Divine Decree if you graze them in vegetative land?

وَإِنْ رَعَيْتَ الْجَدْبَةَ رَعَيْتَهَا بِقَدَرِ اللَّهِ؟

And if you graze them in the barren land, then is, are you doing so according to the Divine Decree? (Which means that when Allah (SWT) has given you two options, you must select the easiest option)

(Then the hadith continues)

قَالَ: فَجَاءَ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ عَوْفٍ - وَكَانَ مُتَعَبِّيًا فِي بَعْضِ حَاجَتِهِ

There happened to come 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf, who had been absent for some of his needs.

فَقَالَ: إِنَّ عِنْدِي فِي هَذَا عِلْمًا، سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ

He said: I have knowledge about this matter. I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) saying

إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَا تَقْدُمُوا عَلَيْهِ، وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا فِرَارًا مِنْهُ

"If you hear of the outbreak of a plague in a land, you should not enter it, and if it spreads in the land where you are, you should not depart from it."

قَالَ: فَحَمِدَ اللَّهُ عُمَرُ ثُمَّ انْصَرَفَ

Thereupon 'Umar bin Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him) praised Allah and went back.²¹

²¹ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 5729

What can we extract from this statement of the Prophet (ﷺ)?

- 1) Plague (طاعون) is a contagious and infectious disease.
- 2) Even the companions (Sahaba) of the Prophet (ﷺ) had disagreements amongst themselves, but they weren't disrespectful to each other.²²
- 3) This plague took the lives of 25000 to 30000 people, including some of the well-known companions.²³
- 4) Before making critical administrative decisions from a religious perspective, the government should consult scholars.
- 5) Umar (RA), while taking counsel and advice, took into consideration the level and status of different companions.
- 6) It is good to have differences of opinion²⁴ because it gives you the flexibility to select the most appropriate one for your situation.²⁵
- 7) Umar (RA)'s decision was consistent with the ayah of the Quran in Surat Al-Imran, Ayah 159:

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

“Take counsel of people and then make a decision and then trust Allah (SWT). Indeed Allah loves those who trust in Him.”²⁶

In this ayah, there is a sequence of actions which Umar (RA) followed:

1. Planning and counseling (تدبير)
2. Making a decision (عزم).

²² This shows us that the companions disagreed with each other about the issue of how to respond to the plague. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise to Muslims that the scholars of today also disagree on the issue of how to respond to Coronavirus. Even so, we should still respect each other's opinions. Remember that Allah (SWT) will reward every scholar for their effort even if they reach to a wrong conclusion as mentioned in Sahih Muslim, Hadith no. 4584

²³ Ibn Kathir, البداية والنهاية, page 76, volume 10 Also Tabari, تاريخ الطبري, page 101, volume 4

²⁴ Only that difference of opinion will be considered valid where scholars have some evidence.

²⁵ This is also said by Ibn Taymiyyah: “Disagreement among classical scholars is a source of mercy and their agreement is a clear-cut evidence,” in his book Majmoo' Al-Fatawa, Volume 30, Page 80

²⁶ Sequence here is very important. First seek counsel and then make a decision, because if you already made a decision then there is no point of seeking advice.

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3. Trusting Allah (توكل)
- 8) Abu Ubaydah Ibn Jarrah was one of the greatest companions and was given glad tidings of Jannah by the Prophet (ﷺ). Even so, his opinion was challenged and refuted by Umar (RA), which shows that Abu Ubaydah can also make juristic mistakes (اجتهاد). May Allah be pleased with them all.
- 9) Many times, the juristic opinion (اجتهاد) of a companion is reconciled with the revelation.
- 10) The historic statement of Umar (RA) “Yes, we are running from the decree of Allah to the decree of Allah” illustrates that:
- It is a religious obligation for all of us not to commit suicide and to take all precautions to protect ourselves and each other from the harm of contagious diseases. After taking all the preventative measures, we have to put our trust in Allah (SWT).
 - Death is inevitable, but we have to strive hard in this world until the last breath.
 - One fascinating aspect of his statement is the use of the word “قدر” (decree), which is unfortunately abused in our times. As Muslims, we believe that Allah has decreed everything for us. However, we still have a responsibility to make plans (تدبير) and put our utmost efforts in everything we do.
- 11) If there is a difference of opinion and one scholar’s juristic opinion is more accurate and in line with the revelation, then that scholar should become humble and grateful to Allah (SWT) as Umar (RA) was instead of blaming and insulting the other opinions.
- 12) Self-quarantine is an Islamic principle that was given to limit the spread of diseases and for damage control.
- 13) When there is a new and unprecedented issue, you, as a leader, have to show flexibility and take every advice presented before making a decision, especially when it involves matters of life and death. As the following hadith states:

“فَإِنَّ الْإِمَامَ أَنْ يُخْطِئَ فِي الْعَفْوِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَنْ يُخْطِئَ فِي الْعُقُوبَةِ.”

Divine Guidance about Coronavirus:

" Indeed, if the imam makes an error on the side of leniency, it is better than making an error on the side of severity.²⁷"

14) Islamic law has strict laws (عزيمة) and concessions (رخصة), but suicide is absolutely haram (prohibited) in Islam.

15) To save the life of any human being (regardless of faith) is one of the objectives of Islamic law, as stated in the Quran.²⁸

16) We also see in the example given by Umar (RA) that trusting Allah doesn't mean to act foolishly. Similarly, this was elaborated by Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) when he was asked:

قَالَ رَجُلٌ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أُرْسِلُ نَاقَتِي وَأَتَوَكَّلُ؟

"One person asked the Prophet (ﷺ): Should I leave my camel and then trust{that Allah will protect my camel}?"

"اعقلها وتوكل."

"The Prophet (ﷺ) responded: First tie your camel and then trust Allah.²⁹"

Misunderstanding Regarding a Hadith about the Plague

One hadith is currently circulating on social media, which is essential to mention. Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) said³⁰:

«لَا عَدْوَى وَلَا طَيْرَةٌ، وَلَا هَامَةٌ وَلَا صَفَرٌ، وَفَرٌّ مِنَ الْمَجْذُومِ كَمَا تَفِرُّ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ»

"There is no contagion {without Allah's permission}, nor is there a bad omen from birds, nor is there a bad omen from owls, nor is there any bad omen in the month of Safar, and one should run away from the leper as one runs away from the lion."

²⁷ Sunan Tirmidhi, Hadith no. 1424 (Although scholars of hadith say this hadith is a slightly weak, juristic scholars from the four schools of thought have used this hadith in the كتاب الحدود).

²⁸ Allah says in Surat Al-Maida Ayah 32: To save a life of one human (regardless of faith) is equal to saving the entire humanity.

²⁹ Sahih Ibn Hibban, Hadith no. 731

³⁰ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 5707

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What can we derive from this statement of the Prophet (ﷺ)?

People are using this hadith to say that there is no such thing as a contagious disease because they understood “لا عدوى” to mean “there is no contagious disease.” This is incorrect because of the following reasons:

- 1) It is incorrect to think that the Prophet (ﷺ) said that there are no contagious diseases because he (ﷺ) mentions that one should flee from leprosy, which is a contagious disease. In fact, this hadith is confirming the presence of contagious diseases and telling us to stay far away from them.
- 2) Then why did the Prophet (ﷺ) say “لا عدوى”? During the time of ignorance in the Arabian Peninsula, they had this belief that a disease can spread by itself without the permission and planning of Allah (SWT). The above hadith refutes this idea. No disease spreads from one person to another except by the permission, planning, and wisdom of Allah (SWT).³¹

Not Being Judgmental in our Approach with the Sick and Being Considerate of their Feelings

A group of people was coming to accept Islam, and one from among them was struggling from leprosy. The Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) sent a messenger to him saying³²:

إِنَّا قَدْ بَايَعْنَاكَ فَارْجِعْ

“We have accepted your allegiance, so you may go.”

What do we learn from this statement of the Prophet (ﷺ)?

- The Prophet (ﷺ) was protecting his people from the contagious disease and was being considerate of the one with leprosy by taking a verbal oath

³¹ The irony of our times is that the same statement is said by atheists and agnostics because they don't believe in the existence of God.

³² Sahih Muslim, Hadith no. 2231

Divine Guidance about Coronavirus:

so that he doesn't have to come out from his place. This shows how balanced and moderate the approach of our Prophet (ﷺ) was.

- Although this is concerning leprosy, this can also be applied to other contagious diseases that are life-threatening.
- We learn to take into consideration the feelings of the one who is sick. Those in isolation deserve love and respect, as was shown by our beloved Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ).³³

Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) Wants us to Ponder about where this Contagious Pandemic Originates

One companion asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about a contagious itching disease called mange:

فَقَالَ أُعْرَابِيٌّ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، فَمَا بَالُ إِبِلِي، تَكُونُ فِي الرَّمْلِ كَأَنَّهَا الطِّبَاءُ، فَيَأْتِي الْبَعِيرُ الْأَجْرَبُ
فَيَدْخُلُ بَيْنَهَا فَيَجْرُهَا؟

"A Bedouin said, " Oh Messenger of Allah, then what about my camels? They are like deer on the sand, but when a camel with mange comes and mixes with them, they all get infected with mange."

فَقَالَ: «فَمَنْ أَعْدَى الْأَوَّلَ».

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Then who conveyed the (mange) disease to the first one?"³⁴

What is significant about this statement of the Prophet (ﷺ)?

- The disease of itching is created by Allah (SWT) to test the human being.

³³ In another hadith (which is slightly weak), Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) said³³: "لا تُبَيِّنُوا النَّظَرَ إِلَى الْمَجْذُومِينَ" "Do not stare at those with leprosy (a dangerous contagious disease)" – tirmidhi

³⁴ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 5717

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- The apparent meaning of this statement of the Prophet (ﷺ) is that we all should think about how the first case of this contagious disease came into existence. Who is the Creator of all the contagious diseases?
- This hadith refutes the claims of atheists that everything is due to cause & effect and ignores the Creator who initiates all contagious diseases.

The analogy about the Unhealthy Animal given by the Prophet (ﷺ)

Animals also have contagious diseases like human beings. The Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) said:

“لَا يُورَدَنَّ مُرَضٌّ عَلَى مُصِحٍّ.”

“The cattle (sheep, cows, camels, etc.) suffering from a disease should not be mixed with healthy cattle”³⁵

What lesson can we obtain from this statement of the Prophet (ﷺ)?

- Similar to how the Prophet (ﷺ) told us to separate between healthy and unhealthy animals, most scholars use this analogy to say that we should separate between healthy and unhealthy humans as a precautionary measure.

What is the Status of a Person Dying from Plague?

The person who is dying from the plague is considered to be a martyr in Islam because Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) said³⁶:

الطَّاعُونَ شَهَادَةٌ لِكُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ

“The death from the plague (deadly contagious virus) will be considered as martyrdom for a Muslim”

³⁵ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 5770

³⁶ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 2830

What is our Responsibility During this Pandemic?

It is part of our religious obligations to take all the medical precautions, as suggested by the experts (as mentioned in the first half of this research). From a spiritual standpoint, we can do the following:

1. Seeking forgiveness:

- Allah says in the Quran³⁷:

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

“Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness”

Ali (RA) said³⁸:

لَا رُفْعَ بَلَاءٍ إِلَّا بِتَوْبَةٍ

“Allah doesn’t remove the hardship except seeking forgiveness”

This should be done from leaders (political, religious, media, business, etc.) because the rise and fall of a nation depend on their leaders. This should also be done at the individual level by each and every one of us. We should sincerely ask Allah (SWT) to forgive our sins. We should repent from the sinful life and commit not to return to it.

2. Sending peace and mercy on Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ):

- Among many benefits of sending peace and mercy on Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ), one of the benefits is that it removes the calamity as mentioned by Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ):

إِذْنُ تَكْفِي هَمِّكَ وَيَغْفِرَ ذَنْبَكَ

“(One of the benefits of sending peace and mercy on Prophet is)
Then your concerns will be taken care of and your sins will be forgiven.”³⁹

³⁷ Surah Al-Anfaal, Ayah no. 33

³⁸ Ibn Qayyim, الداء والدواء, page 179

³⁹ Sunan Tirmidhi, Hadith no. 2457

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Ibn Hajar said that this hadith means that sending peace and blessings on Prophet will protect us from all the calamities, including plagues.⁴⁰

3. Tasbeeh⁴¹ - Declaring the greatness and perfection of Allah:

Allah (SWT) says⁴²:

فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ ... لَلَبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

"And had he not been of those who declared perfection of Allah... He would have remained inside the belly until the day they are resurrected"

Imam Shafi'i said⁴³:

“لَمْ أَرْ أَنْفَعَ لِلْوَبَاءِ مِنَ التَّسْبِيحِ”

“For removing Calamity, I don't see anything more beneficial than tasbeeh (declaring perfection of Allah (SWT)).”

⁴⁰ Ibn Hajar in his book *بذل الماعون*

⁴¹ It includes anything which declares perfection of Allah (SWT) like *سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى* / *سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ* / *سُبْحَانَكَ إِلَهِي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ*

⁴² Surah As-Saffat, Ayah. No 144-145

⁴³ Abu Nu'aym, *حلية الأولياء وطبقات الأصفياء*, page 136, volume 9

Supplications narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ):

You can make any dua (supplication) you want in any language because Allah (SWT) knows all languages. Here are a few dua prescribed from Allah (SWT) and Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) directly:

- Whoever reads this three times in the morning and three times in the evening, he/she will not be stricken with a sudden affliction:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ، وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ، وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

“In the name of Allah with whose name nothing can harm on earth or in heaven and He is the All-hearing, All-knowing”⁴⁴

- Make this dua three times daily for protection from all evils:

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ

“I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allah from the evil of that which He has created.”⁴⁵

- Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) taught us to make this dua during an epidemic:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبَرَصِ، وَالْجُنُونِ، وَالْجَذَامِ، وَمِنْ سَيِّئِ الْأَسْقَامِ

“O Allah, I seek refuge with you from leprosy, and from insanity, and from Hansen’s disease, and from evil diseases”⁴⁶

- He (ﷺ) prescribed us to say this dua as well:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ زَوَالِ نِعْمَتِكَ، وَتَحْوِيلِ عَافِيَتِكَ، وَفُجَاءَةِ نَقْمَتِكَ، وَجَمِيعِ سَخَطِكَ

⁴⁴ Sunan Abu Dawood, Hadith no. 5088

⁴⁵ Sahih Muslim, Hadith no. 2709

⁴⁶ Sunan Abu Dawood, Hadith no. 1554

What Does Islam Say About the COVID-19 Pandemic?

“O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the withdrawing of Your blessing, and the loss of the well-being that You granted me, and the sudden onset of Your wrath, and anything that may lead to Your displeasure”⁴⁷

- Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) said:

دَعْوَةُ ذِي النُّونِ إِذْ دَعَا وَهُوَ فِي بَطْنِ الْحُوتِ: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ، فَإِنَّهُ لَمْ يَدْعُ بِهَا رَجُلٌ مُسْلِمٌ فِي شَيْءٍ قَطُّ إِلَّا اسْتَجَابَ اللَّهُ لَهُ

“The dua of Prophet Yunus when he was in the belly of the whale was:
“There is no one worthy of worship except You! You are pure, no doubt I am from the wrongdoers.” If a Muslim makes this dua in any matter, then Allah will respond to his/her dua.”⁴⁸

- Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) never failed to say this supplication every morning and evening:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي دِينِي وَدُنْيَايَ وَأَهْلِي وَمَالِي اللَّهُمَّ اسْتُرْ عَوْرَاتِي وَآمِنْ رَوْعَاتِي اللَّهُمَّ احْفَظْنِي مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِي وَعَنْ يَمِينِي وَعَنْ شِمَالِي وَمِنْ فَوْقِي وَأَعُوذُ بِعَظَمَتِكَ أَنْ أُغْتَالَ مِنْ تَحْتِي

“O Allah, I ask You for well-being in this world and in the hereafter. O Allah, I ask You for pardon and well-being in my faith, my worldly affairs, my family, and my wealth. O Allah, conceal my faults and protect me from that which causes me to worry. O Allah, protect me from before me and from behind me, from my right and from my left, and from above me, and I seek refuge in Your Greatness lest I be destroyed from beneath me.”⁴⁹

- Another important reminder which will offer protection against evil and ward off harm, by Allah’s leave, is that which was narrated by ‘Abdullah ibn Khubayb who said: We went out on a rainy and very dark night,

⁴⁷ Sahih Muslim, Hadith no. 2739

⁴⁸ Sunan At-Tirmidhi, Hadith no. 3505

⁴⁹ Sunan Abu Dawood, Hadith no. 5074

Supplications narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ):

looking for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to lead us in prayer, and we found him. He said: “Say,” but I did not say anything. Then he said: “Say,” but I did not say anything. Then he said: “Say,” and I said: What should I say, O Messenger of Allah? He said:

قُلْ : (قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ) وَالْمُعَوِّذَتَيْنِ حِينَ تُمْسِي وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ تَكْفِيكَ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

“Say: Surah Al-Ikhlaas, Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Naas in the evening and in the morning, three times, and they will suffice you against all things.”⁵⁰

The Prophet (ﷺ) provided us with many other dua (supplications). We should make it a habit to invoke Allah (SWT) with this dua regularly. Remember, dua isn't about reading words without understanding, instead it is calling upon Allah (SWT) from within our heart.

⁵⁰ Sunan Abu Dawood, Hadith no. 5082

Contemporary Fiqhi (Juristic) Issues Regarding Coronavirus

Before we discuss any Fiqhi issues, it is crucial for us to understand what Allah (SWT) and Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) said about giving concessions to make things easy for people.⁵¹

A) Allah (SWT) says⁵²:

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

"Allah (SWT) wants to make things easy for you, and He doesn't want to make things difficult for you"

B) Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) said to Imran bin Hussayn (RA), a companion who had difficulty in praying salah while standing⁵³:

صَلِّ قَائِمًا، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ فَقَاعِدًا، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَى جَنْبٍ

"Pray standing, but if you don't have the ability then pray sitting, and if you can't then pray lying down"

C) Allah (SWT) has given concessions to travelers, the sick, and the elderly in regards to fasting in Ramadan.⁵⁴

D) Once there was a cold windy night in Madina, the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered people to pray at home and not to congregate in the masjid by instructing

⁵¹ Although we will discuss the principle of concession, It should be noted that the principle of ease and hardship does not necessarily arise here. It is more of a matter of preservation of life (which is fard), and whether that is certain (yaqini) or perceived (dhanni). Secondly, the matter of rain in those days was completely different from our days. In those days (as there were no sheltering means such as cars), it was almost certain that going in the rain was a danger to health, possibly fatal. Hence, we see in many ahadith a strong reaction to instances of rain. The above are some textual evidences for the principle of alleviating hardship:

⁵² Surat Al-Baqarah, Ayah 185

⁵³ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 1117

⁵⁴ Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayah 185

Contemporary Fiqhi (Juristic) Issues Regarding Coronavirus

the Mu'adhin (the caller to prayer) to say in the Adhan (call to prayer):
“صَلُّوا فِي الْبُيُوتِ” (pray at your home).⁵⁵

E) Once there was rain and the roads were muddy, people were asked to pray Jumu'ah at home and the Mu'adhin would say in the Adhan: “صَلُّوا فِي بَيْتِكُمْ” (pray in your homes)⁵⁶.

F) Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) said⁵⁷:

إِنَّ الدِّينَ يُسْرٌ ، وَلَنْ يُشَادَّ الدِّينَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا غَلَبَهُ ، فَسَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا

Religion is easy, and if one overburdens himself in the religion then he will not be able to continue in that way. So, do not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded.

With this framework in mind, let us discuss Fiqh:

Suspending the Masjid for Jumu'ah and for the 5 Daily Prayers

The current outbreak of COVID-19 has resulted in complete shutdowns in many countries including here in the USA which is unprecedented. Many questions arise: What about the 5 daily obligatory prayers in the masjid? What about Jumu'ah prayers?

There are two different perspectives we want our readers to understand: One is the individual perspective which is when an individual misses Jumu'ah or any other obligatory prayers; and the second is the collective perspective which is when the Islamic centers/Masajid suspend Jumu'ah and all obligatory prayers.

⁵⁵ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 632

⁵⁶ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 901

⁵⁷ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 39 and Sahih Muslim, Hadith no. 2816

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From the Individual Perspective:

Praying the 5 Daily Obligatory Prayers at Home

What does Islamic Law say about praying the 5 daily prayers in congregation? According to the majority⁵⁸ of scholars, it is not obligatory for one to pray the 5 daily prayers in congregation. The majority of those⁵⁹ who do consider them obligatory did not demand their performance at a masjid.

Also, the majority of scholars consider “sickness” as a legitimate excuse to miss the congregational prayers. Therefore, during these times, you can pray in congregation at home with your family and you can get the reward of praying in congregation InshaAllah.⁶⁰ This is consistent with the hadith of Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ):

إِذَا مَرَضَ الْعَبْدُ، أَوْ سَافَرَ، كُتِبَ لَهُ مِثْلُ مَا كَانَ يَعْمَلُ مُقِيمًا صَحِيحًا

When a slave of Allah (SWT) suffers from illness or sets on a journey, he is credited with the equal of whatever good works he used to do when he was healthy or at home⁶¹

Missing Jumu'ah Prayer out of Fear

Jumu'ah prayer is one of the rituals (شعائر) of Islam and it is an obligation upon every adult male.⁶² The Prophet (ﷺ) said:⁶³

مَنْ تَرَكَ ثَلَاثَ جُمُعَ تَهَاوُنًا بِهَا، طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قَلْبِهِ

⁵⁸ All the Imam except Imam Ahmed ibn Hambal (See the references below)

البدائع ١ / ١٥٥، وابن عابدين ١ / ٣٧١، وفتح القدير ١ / ٣٠٠ والدرر ١ / ٣١٩، ٣٢٠، والحطاب ٢ / ٨١، ٨٢، والقوانين الفقهية ص: ٦٩ نشر دار الكتاب العربي، والمهذب ١ / ١٠٠، وشرح المحلى على المنهاج ١ / ٢٢١.

⁵⁹ Hanbali (٣٧٢) والمغني ٤٥٥ - ٤٥٤ / ١ (كشف القناع)

⁶⁰ Shaykh Khalid Bin ali Al-Mushaeqih, “الأحكام الفقهية المتعلقة بوباء كورونا”, Page: 13

⁶¹ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 2996

⁶² Jumu'ah prayer is not an obligation upon females or children.

⁶³ Sunan Abu Dawood, Hadith no. 1052

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"Whoever neglects three Jumu'ah prayers (in a row) out of negligence will have a seal placed upon his heart"

- In Islamic law, there are those who are excused from attending Jumu'ah. Examples include: travelers, women, children, the blind⁶⁴, the sick, those caring for the sick, those justifiably afraid of becoming sick, those who would need to travel in heavy rain/muddy roads, those who risk their property and wealth being stolen, those who fear their livelihood will be damaged (i.e. baker's bread would burn if he attended prayer)⁶⁵, etc.⁶⁶
- The advice of legal authorities and medical experts has to be taken into serious consideration when justifying the meaning of sickness and fear of sickness. If medical doctors are asking everyone to stay away from all gatherings then this will be considered as a legitimate excuse. You can pray Dhuhr at home and Allah (SWT) knows best.⁶⁷

Should an Individual Pray Jumu'ah at Home or should they Pray Dhuhr?

Classical Scholars have differences of opinion on this matter:

The Evidence of Scholars who Say to Pray Dhuhr, not Jumu'ah, at Home:

The scholars that believe that Jumu'ah prayer cannot be prayed at home use the following arguments:

- 1) A significant objective of Jumu'ah prayer is for there to be a gathering and congregation. Without the congregation, there is no Jumu'ah.
- 2) Jumu'ah is one of the rituals of Islam and must be performed as it was performed by Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) and the Khulafa (Califs).

⁶⁴ Only according to Hanafi

⁶⁵ Only according to Hanbali

⁶⁶ Dr. Wahiba Zuhaili, الفقه الإسلامي وأدلته page 243, volume 2

⁶⁷ Shaykh Khalid Bin ali Al-Mushaeqih, "الأحكام الفقهية المتعلقة بوباء كورونا", Page: 18 and also Please read AMJA Fatwa on their website (www.amjaonline.org) issued on March 3rd 2020

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They never prayed multiple Jumu'ah prayers in the city of Madina.
How could we then have multiple Jumu'ah gatherings at our homes?

- 3) Hanafi scholars require a leader/imam's permission, Maaliki Scholars require that Jumu'ah is only prayed in the masjid, Shafi'i and Hanbali scholars require a minimum presence of 40 men. How is it possible then to have a small Jumu'ah prayer at your home without fulfilling any of these guidelines?⁶⁸

The Evidence of Scholars who say it is Permissible to Pray Jumu'ah at home:

- 1) If the local masjid does not have Jumu'ah prayer, then the ayah of Surat Al-Jumu'ah⁶⁹ will apply and one must establish Jumu'ah prayer at work/home as long as there is the minimum quorum⁷⁰.

- 2) Umar (RA) wrote to some of his companions:

جَمَعُوا حَيْثَمَا كُنْتُمْ

“Pray Jummah wherever you are!”⁷¹

- 3) The majority of scholars allow Muslims to establish Jumu'ah outside of the masjid except for Imam Maalik.⁷²

In the current situation, there is a widespread pandemic outbreak and the medical experts are asking people to avoid all gatherings. It is better to pray Dhuhr at home and not to gather people for Jumu'ah prayer. If one follows the opinion to pray Jumu'ah at home, then one must follow the local guidelines for

⁶⁸ Shaikh Khaled Al-Masheeq, الأحكام الفقهية المتعلقة بفيروس كورونا, Page 18.

⁶⁹ Surah Al-Jumu'ah, Ayah no. 9: فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ (then proceed to the remembrance of Allah)

⁷⁰ Quorum in the different schools of thought:

Hanafi: Imam and 3 men praying behind him

Ibn Taymiyyah & the two students of Imam Abu Haneefa: Imam and 2 men praying behind him

Maaliki: 12 men

Shafi'i & Hanbali: 40 men

Ibn Hazem & Imam Shawkani: Imam + 1 man will be sufficient.

⁷¹ Musanaf Ibn Abi Shaiba, Hadith no. 5068 (Sahih by Albani)

⁷² Dr. Wahiba Zuhaili, الفقه الإسلامي وأدلته, Volume 2, Page 238.

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the maximum gathering size when choosing the quorum based on the school of thought (Please see the footnotes for quorum size).

What about the Remaining Recommended Acts for Friday?

Apart from Salah, all the other things including taking a shower (which is recommended according to all schools of thought), reading Surat Al-Kahf, wearing beautiful clothing, etc. are still recommended.⁷³

Can we Stand Apart from each other while Praying in Congregation?

This is also a common question asked because public health officials have advised everyone to stay at least 6 feet apart. In normal circumstances, when we are praying in congregation, Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) said⁷⁴:

أَقِيمُوا الصُّفُوفَ ، وَحَادُّوا بَيْنَ الْمَنَاقِبِ ، وَسُدُّوا الْحُلَلَ ، وَلِينُوا بِأَيْدِي إِخْوَانِكُمْ ، وَلَا تَذَرُوا فُرُجَاتٍ
لِلشَّيْطَانِ ، وَمَنْ وَصَلَ صَفًّا وَصَلَهُ اللَّهُ ، وَمَنْ قَطَعَ صَفًّا قَطَعَهُ اللَّهُ

“Straighten the rows, stand shoulder to shoulder and fill the gaps; be gentle with the hands of your brothers, and do not leave gaps for the Shaytaan. Whoever connects a row, Allah (SWT) will connect him (with His mercy), and whoever breaks a row, Allah (SWT) will cut him off (from His mercy).”

Few scholars state that it is obligatory to stand right next to each other in prayer. Other scholars say that it is highly discouraged (مكروه تحريمي) to leave a gap. Either way it is highly encouraged to fill the gaps between rows and stand right next to each other.⁷⁵ However, if that does not happen the prayer is still valid.⁷⁶

⁷³ Even though I selected this opinion from Shaikh Khalid but its important to know that there is other scholarly opinion which says that if you are praying Dhuhr Salah then these recommendations drop. (Shaikh Khalid Al-Masheeqk, الأحكام الفقهية المتعلقة بفيروس كورونا, Page 18-19)

⁷⁴ Sunan Abu Dawood, Hadith no. 666

⁷⁵ Please see the references: مغني المحتاج ١ / ٢٤٨ ، والقوانين الفقهية ص ٧٤ ، وسبل السلام ٢ / ٢٩ .

⁷⁶ Haafiz ibn Hajar, Fath ul Bari, Volume 2, Page 210: “ومع القول بأن التسوية واجبة فصلاة من خالف ولم يسو صحيحة”

"Although we say that straightening the rows is obligatory, the prayer of one who does not do that and does not straighten the row is still valid"

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When it comes to COVID-19, the local public health officials are warning people to stay 6 feet apart from each other. The majority of contemporary scholars say that this constitutes a sufficient excuse and that the prayer will be valid without any sin while few other contemporary scholars say that praying individually is better in that case than leaving 6 feet gap.⁷⁷

From the Collective Perspective:

Should the Masjid Suspend its Activities at this Time of COVID-19?

If the government authorities or local public health authorities in a particular city/county/state/country have banned the faith-based gatherings or advised the suspension of these gatherings because of a potential harm, then this constitutes a legitimate excuse to suspend all masjid activities and pray at home. I do not know of any disagreements among the classical scholars when it comes to complying with one's local authority. The Masjid's management should follow the instructions of the local government.

So Why is there a Disagreement?

The disagreement occurs when there are different types of restrictions placed by the local city or government on specific numbers instead of a complete ban on faith-based gatherings. Some states in the USA have placed a restriction of no more than 10 people to gather at a time. However, there is no outright ban on religious gatherings. This is where our contemporary scholars have disagreed. One group of scholars argues that all masjid activities should be suspended. The second group argues that all masjid activities should be limited to 10 people. The nature of their disagreement was like the disagreement of the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) when they were facing the unique plague in Syria as mentioned earlier in this book. We ask Allah (SWT) to reward all of our contemporary scholars for their juristic effort (اجتهاد) to find the truth. Ameen

⁷⁷ Shaykh Khalid Bin ali Al-Mushaeqih, الأحكام الفقهية المتعلقة بفيروس كورونا, Page 17

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The Argument for Suspending Activities of the Masjid

Some scholars say that even though the government has not entirely banned religious gatherings, our medical authorities strongly recommend against any gatherings. We should avoid gatherings because of the potential harm “ضرر”⁷⁸ that could occur if the Coronavirus were to spread. There is no benefit in asking people who have flu-like symptoms to stay away from the masjid because those who have Coronavirus are contagious long before they show symptoms.⁷⁹

Effective infection control will require that we proactively isolate ourselves long before showing symptoms.

For this reason, it is better to take a proactive approach and to suspend all the activities of the masjid.

This group uses agreed-upon legal maxims such as **“harm must be removed”**⁸⁰ and **“removing harm (مفسدة) will take precedence over securing benefit (maslaha)”**⁸¹, **“hardship begets ease”**⁸², etc.⁸³ to justify suspending all the activities of the masjid.

The harm of spreading this virus is much greater than that of bothering the people with the odor of garlic; and the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “He who eats of this plant (garlic) should not come near our masjid and should not bother us with the odor of garlic.”⁸⁴

This group also uses the higher objective of Islamic law to say that one of the prime objectives of Islam is to protect and preserve human life, which comes

⁷⁸ For a “harm” to be justifiable, it has to be “حقيقي = real”, not assumed/perceived. It also has to impact a significant number of people.

⁷⁹ <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/coronavirus-most-contagious-before-during-first-week-symptoms> & <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>

⁸⁰ “الضرر يزال”: “harm must be removed” by Imam Suyooti, الأشباه والنظائر, page 83

⁸¹ “درء المفاسد أولى من جلب المصالح”: “Removing harm will take precedence over securing benefit”, Imam Suyooti, الأشباه والنظائر, page 87 & Ibn-Nujaym, الأشباه والنظائر, page 78

⁸² “المشقة تجلب التيسير”: “Hardship begets ease” by Imam Ibn Nujaym, الأشباه والنظائر, page 64

⁸³ Al Nadwi, Al-Qawaid Al-Fiqhiya and Dr. Ahmed Zuhaili, Al-Qawaid Al-Fiqhiya

⁸⁴ Sahih Muslim, Hadith no. 564

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before the protection of religion⁸⁵ (such as eating pork if you are dying from starvation or committing to a statement of disbelief under force)⁸⁶

This group uses historical facts as well. For example, during the famine which affected Egypt and Al-Andalus with a pandemic hitting Cordoba around the year 1056 (448 Hijri), all of the masajid shut down such that no one was praying in the masajid. This was also known as the "year of great starvation"⁸⁷.

At the time of writing this paper, most countries in the Middle East and most of the Islamic Centers in the USA have suspended their activities including Jumu'ah and the 5 daily congregational prayers.

The Argument for Not Suspending Activities of the Masjid

If the government has not entirely banned religious gatherings and only placed a limit on the number of people, then we should gather with that specific number of people and continue the 5 daily prayers and Jumu'ah prayer in congregation. Since the government limits gatherings to a maximum of 10 people, then we should pray Jumu'ah and congregation salah with 10 young, healthy people. This is a major ritual of Islam (شعائر) and an obligatory act. We don't have any evidence to suspend it unless we are directly forbidden by the local authorities.

This group also took proactive measures by asking only symptomless young men to come to the masajid. People with symptoms, women, children, and the elderly are asked not to come to the masjid in order to limit the spread of harm. These scholars also state that people should leave immediately after the mandatory prayer. People should pray the sunnah prayer at home. In summary healthy,

⁸⁵ الإحكام في أصول الإحكام، علي بن محمد الآمدي، page 275, volume 4.

⁸⁶ I just want the reader to know that the disagreement between these sequences of higher objectives of Islamic law is very well known amongst scholars.

⁸⁷ Ad-Dhahabi in his book "History of Islam", Page ٦١٤, Volume 9 writes: (Original Arabic text of his book is as follows):

وفيهما كان القحط العظيم بالأندلس والوباء، ومات الخلق بإشبيلية، بحيث أن المساجد بقيت مغلقة ما لها من يصلي فيها، ويسمى عام الجوع الكبير.

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young men should come to the masjid so long as the number of people praying does not cross the limit put in place by the government.

Certain scholars from the Hanafi and Shafi'i⁸⁸ schools of thought prescribed Qunoot Nazila⁸⁹ during the time of plague in the Ummah. How can one suspend the mandatory congregational prayers while being asked to gather and make a special congregational prayer?

Another argument for not suspending the activities of the masjid is that the Coronavirus has not reached the level of a real "harm." There are a few conditions for a disease to be considered as a "harm" and 2 of them are:

- A) It should be real and certain (متحقق), and to the extent of its certainty, different levels of rulings will be applied. The reasoning is thus: it is haram for a person to put his/her own life to destruction (suicide). If that is certain (yaqini) in a place (for example, a person goes to a masjid knowing for certain that someone has the coronavirus and they will be touching objects and interacting with people. In this case, it is haram for that person to put themselves in that situation. On the other hand, if someone has strong belief (ghalib al-dhann) that they will be infected if going to the mosque (maybe because they don't know for certain that there is an infected person coming but the numbers of infected people have reached such a high number that it's very likely lots of people are infected), then it is wajib for them to stay away from the mosque. The method of finding the probability and the assessment of risk will be left up to medical experts⁹⁰. It becomes very apparent thus that the ruling on whether Jumu'ah will be held or not varies on each locality, and the Imams/scholars will have to work with medical experts to come to a conclusion.

⁸⁸ An-Nawwi, المجموع, Page 494, Volume 3

⁸⁹ A special congregational prayer which the Prophet (ﷺ) prescribed at the time of calamity. Most schools of thought agree to it except for the Maaliki.

⁹⁰ (by expert, I mean infectious disease Doctor or expert on pandemics)

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B) The harm must be excessive (فاحش) and this group argues that only a few people have symptoms so only those people should not come to the masjid⁹¹.

This group also uses higher objectives of Islamic law to say that one of the prime objectives of Islamic law is to protect the religion and this should come before the protection of life (worshipping Allah is the purpose of creation⁹²)⁹³.⁹⁴

This group also has cited incidences in the history where masajid were not closed for Jumu'ah during the time of plagues⁹⁵ and Allah (SWT) knows best.

CONCLUSION: Despite the disagreements of our contemporary scholars on this issue, we pray that Allah (SWT) reward them for all their juristic efforts (اجتهاد). I will advise the beloved reader to **stay at home** regardless of whether your masjid is open or closed. Stay home and pray all the prayers at home until the situation gets better! We ask Allah (SWT) to remove this virus from the face of the earth, Ameen!

⁹¹ **Counter argument:** what is “excessive” is very subjective and you must go back to each locality to see how they define what is excessive. The medical authorities are saying that the Coronavirus is extremely contagious so this will be a legitimate harm for us.

⁹² Surah Ad-Daariyat, Ayah no. 56

⁹³ Ash-Shatbi, الموافقات, 2/14

⁹⁴ Disagreement between the sequences of Maqasid of Shariah is well known among scholars and both the sides have their evidences.

⁹⁵ Imam Ad-Dahabi, العبر في خبر من غير, page 56, volume 1

RECOMMENDATIONS/Q&A

Question: Can we Suspend Eid Salah (Prayer)?

I pray that the situation improves so that we can all pray Eid Salah with our congregation, Ameen!

If the situation does not improve, then this is an important question.

Eid Salah is mandatory according to the Hanafi school of thought, a communal obligation according to Hanbali school of thought, and an emphatic Sunnah according to the Shafi'i and Hanbali schools of thought⁹⁶.

However, if there is a justifiable fear of harm as reported by local health authorities or the government has placed restrictions on faith-based gatherings to limit the spread of infection, then it is permissible to suspend the Eid Salah similar to what was discussed in the case of Jumu'ah prayer⁹⁷.

Question: Can we Pray Eid Salah at Home?

There are two different opinions: Scholars from the Hanafi and Maaliki⁹⁸ schools of thought say that one cannot pray Eid Salah at home while scholars from the Hanbali and Shafi⁹⁹ schools of thought say that one can pray Eid Salah at home. Ibn Taymiyyah selected the former opinion stating that there is no need to pray Eid Salah at home because it defeats the purpose of the Eid gathering.

It is usually recommended to hug, shake hands, and visit loved ones at the time of Eid to congratulate each other. However, during this time of the pandemic, it is

⁹⁶ Dr. Wahiba Zuhaili, *المبسوط ٢٠٣٧*، منج الجليل ١٢٧٥، معني المحتاج ١٣١٠، الإنصاف (Page 323 Volume 2) *الفقه الإسلامي وأدلته*، وأدلتها (١٤٢٠)

⁹⁷ Shaykh Khalid Bin ali Al-Mushaeqih, *الأحكام الفقهية المتعلقة بفيروس كورونا*, Page 19

⁹⁸ فتح القدير ١٤٢٩، الباب ١١١٨، الشرح الصغير ٥٢٤ \ ١ والقوانين الفقهية ص ٨٥

⁹⁹ معني المحتاج ١٣١٥، المهذب ١١٢٠، كشف القناع ٥٨-٦٣، المعني ٣٩٠-٣٩٢ \ ٢

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better not to do these actions because of the agreed-upon legal maxim that “harm must be removed”¹⁰⁰.

Question: Can we Suspend Taraweeh?

I pray that the situation improves so that we can all pray Eid Salah with our congregation, Ameen!

Taraweeh¹⁰¹ is not wajib (obligatory) according to all scholars. It is a voluntary prayer with great reward. There is no difference of opinion in the permissibility of praying Taraweeh at home. In fact, there is a disagreement among the scholars of Fiqh about whether praying Taraweeh at home is better than praying at the masjid?¹⁰² In normal circumstances, the vast majority of scholars say that it is better to pray in the masjid. But during this pandemic, when one is already asked to pray obligatory prayers (Jumu'ah and the 5 daily prayers) at home, then there is no reason to pray Taraweeh in the masjid when it is not even an obligatory prayer. However, in that case one should pray it at home as Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) used to pray night prayers individually at home throughout the year¹⁰³ as there is an immense reward in it.¹⁰⁴

Question: Can we Combine Prayers During COVID-19?

The scholars generally have disagreed about combining prayers for any reason. The Hanafi school of thought does not allow combining prayers at all except at the time of Hajj.

Hanbali, Maaliki and a group within the Shafi'i schools of thought allow combining prayers¹⁰⁵ when it comes to fear. They use the hadith of Ibn Abbas (RA) as evidence:

¹⁰⁰ See al-Ashbah Wa Nazair from Ibn Nujaym and Imam Suyooti.

¹⁰¹ Night prayers in the Holy month of Ramadan

¹⁰² Imam Nawwi, Al-Majmu, Volume 3, Page 526

¹⁰³ Shaykh Khalid Bin ali Al-Mushaeqih, الأحكام الفقهية المتعلقة بفيروس كورونا, Page 21

¹⁰⁴ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 37

¹⁰⁵ Dr. Hatem Al-Haj, Sharh of Umdah Al-Fiqh, Page 173, Volume 1

RECOMMENDATIONS/Q&A

جَمَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَيْنَ الظُّهْرِ وَالْعَصْرِ، وَبَيْنَ الْمَغْرِبِ وَالْعِشَاءِ مِنْ غَيْرِ خَوْفٍ وَلَا مَطَرٍ

“Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) combined Dhuhr with Asr and Maghrib with Isha without any fear and without any rain”

When Ibn Abbas was asked about the wisdom behind the action of Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ), he responded: “He [the Prophet (ﷺ)] wanted that no one among his Ummah should be put through [unnecessary] hardship”¹⁰⁶

This indicates that during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), fear was a genuine excuse to join prayers, or else Ibn Abbas (RA) would not have mentioned it.

But the majority of the scholars who permit combining prayers only allow prayers to be combined in the masjid. So, it is safe to say that if you are praying at home then it is better to follow the majority opinion and pray the prayers at their time without combining¹⁰⁷.

Question: If a Muslim Dies from the Coronavirus, how do we Wash, Shroud, and do the Funeral Prayers for them?

Washing, shrouding and burying someone after his/her death is a communal obligation in Islam. The majority of scholars say that a Muslim should be the one to wash and shroud the body.

However, if the body is infected with Coronavirus and the medical authorities are saying that there is potential harm in washing the body, then follow these steps:

1. See if the medical doctors will allow you to thoroughly wash the body while wearing personal protective equipment.
2. If the complete washing is not doable, then try to wash the body by pouring water on it once, as this is an obligation according to the majority of scholars. This can be done even on non-water repellent clothing.

¹⁰⁶ Sahih Muslim, Hadith no. 705

¹⁰⁷ For details, read AMJA fatwa on their website www.amjaonline.org

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3. If even partial washing is not possible, then just do tayammum.
Tayammum on the deceased will be performed similarly to how a living person performs it. The washer strikes the dust with their two hands (while wearing gloves) and then wipes the face and hands of the deceased with them.
4. If tayammum is also not possible, then skip the washing as it is not feasible in this case.

We must continue to follow the communal obligation of washing the dead to the best of our ability, as long as we have the capacity to observe them. However, if medical doctors suggest not washing the body due to potential harm, then we should follow their advice¹⁰⁸.

This rule applies to shrouding as well. In normal circumstances, the body would be shrouded with 3 clothes for men and 5 clothes for women according to the majority of scholars. If the medical doctors say that shrouding isn't possible without putting yourself in harm's way, then at the very least the body should be covered with a hospital gown or sealed bag to cover the nakedness.

As for the funeral prayer, it is one of the rights of our dead and a communal obligation: if one person performs it, then the rest will not be liable. When praying in congregation, then people should pray while keeping the recommended distance between each other. This will not invalidate their prayer. If there is a fear that the body can cause harm to the people of the masjid then the funeral prayer should be prayed at the funeral home or at the cemetery either before or after the burial. The close family members, who are likely in quarantine from exposure to the Coronavirus, can either pray the absentee funeral prayer or pray at the grave. In the case that the body has already been buried without a funeral prayer, then the funeral prayer can be offered in the cemetery. This is permissible according to the majority of

¹⁰⁸ In some cases, the medical doctors would say that the washer has to stay in quarantine for the next 14 days. This is a legitimate excuse.

RECOMMENDATIONS/Q&A

scholars.¹⁰⁹ An example from the Prophet (ﷺ)'s time was when the Prophet (ﷺ)¹¹⁰ did a funeral prayer for the woman who used to clean the masjid. She had died and was buried without his knowledge. Once he (ﷺ) found out that she had died, he (ﷺ) prayed over her grave¹¹¹.¹¹²

We ask Allah (SWT) to protect us, our families, and our communities.
Ameen

Question: Can we use Zakah Money to Cover the Funeral Expenses of the Victims of COVID-19?

The funeral expenses are the responsibility of the family of the deceased. In normal circumstances, the Zakah money cannot be used for funeral expenses. However, if the family of the deceased does not have enough money and the deceased does not have any money left to take care of the funeral expenses, then they may receive Zakah money as long as they are Muslims¹¹³.

Question: Can I Defer my Zakah to the Next Year because of the Current Economic Crisis?

It is obligatory to pay Zakah on time. This occurs once one's wealth reaches the nisaab (minimum threshold) and one full (Hijri) year has passed since then. It is permissible to give Zakah early. Delaying it with no excuse is a sin. A legitimate reason to delay would be not finding valid recipients of Zakah, etc.

The majority of scholars do not allow deferring Zakah for economic reasons. However, Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal does allow deferring Zakah to the next year using the narration of Umar (RA) when he chose not to collect Zakah

¹⁰⁹ البدائع، ١/٣١٤، الشرح الصغير ١/٤٤٥، الأم ١/٢٤٤، مغني المحتاج، ١/٣٤٦

¹¹⁰ Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 446

¹¹¹ Sunan Abu Dawood, Hadith no. 3203

¹¹² See AMJA fatwa for more details

¹¹³ Shaikh Khalid Bin ali Al-Mushaeqih, الأحكام الفقهية المتعلقة بفيروس كورونا، Page 24

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for one year when there was an economic crisis¹¹⁴. The safe option is to follow the majority opinion to pay Zakah on time unless there is a dire need. May Allah (SWT) protect all of us.

¹¹⁴ ٢\١١٦\١١٤٠. مطالب أولي النهى. Also, check AMJA Fatwa for this on www.amjaonline.org

Conclusion

Conclusion

Oh Allah, If I erred, it is from myself. Please accept this work from me and make this a continuous reward for me, my family, my teachers and my students. I ask Allah (SWT) to forgive my shortcomings in this research and request all the beloved readers to remember me, my family and my community in your Duas. May Allah reward all of us immensely and protect all of us, our families, our communities, our loved ones and all of humanity.