

THE MUSLIM RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS

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Introduction

All Praise is for Allah ﷻ and may He bless and grant peace to our Beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

It has been reported that within four months, there have been more than a million diagnosed cases of the Coronavirus pandemic worldwide and thousands of people have died. We mourn for them and supplicate to Allah ﷻ to give strength to their families to bear their loss with patience. Amin!

The relevant teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Our Beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has said that Allah ﷻ has assigned a cure for every disease. We supplicate to Allah ﷻ to soon provide means to control this plague. May Allah ﷻ heal the people who have this disease and all diseases, and ease their suffering. Amin.

To stop the spread of any plague such as this, the Prophet ﷺ said that people in a land afflicted with it should not leave it and they should not go to a land that has the plague. Countries worldwide have followed this teaching by sealing their borders. Some countries have restricted travel from one city to another within the country.

Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ also taught us measures that prevent disease. Before each of the five times daily Prayers, we wash our hands, mouth, nostrils, face, arms and feet. We keep ourselves ritually clean with a shower. We wash our hands before eating, after eating, and after using the washroom. We have been taught that Islam is clean, so we have to keep clean. We have to cover the mouth when we sneeze. Many independent minded non-Muslims appreciate these Prophetic teachings about the preventive methods because they are the same ones which are being implemented now.

The Prophet ﷺ recommended the use of black seed as a remedy for all diseases as we learn from this Hadith.

Hazrat Abu Hurayra رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Use the black seed, for undoubtedly it is a cure for all diseases except death”. (Al-Bukhari)

Black seed has been used all over the world as medicine for centuries and has proved to be very effective. So we are not at all surprised that scientific research has also proven its usefulness as a medicine. It is preferably taken with a teaspoon of honey as honey has also been recommended by the Prophet ﷺ. We accept what the Prophet ﷺ said as a matter of faith but given the terms of reference of the pharmaceutical companies, they could use the research findings about black seed to perhaps come up with a cure for this specific disease.

The Muslim response has been to continue to follow the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith (Sayings of the Prophet ﷺ). We have all the teachings. We only have to follow them.

Another Prophetic teaching is not to hoard. Faced with Coronavirus (Covid-19), people unnecessarily started stocking up on toilet paper and began to hoard it. Now the storekeepers are telling them that they cannot return it and they can go on using it even if for a year. It surely pays to listen to the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ.

The Sacred Masajid have been closed

To stop the spread of this virus, 'Umra has been temporarily stopped. The Haramayn Sharifayn in Makkah al-Mukarramah and Madina al-Munawwarah as well as Masjid al-Aqsa have been temporarily closed. All the masjid and musallas (prayer rooms) have been temporarily closed. This is very sad. O Allah! Provide means to bring this pandemic under control at least before the month of Ramadan so that we can begin to go to the masjid and perform the five times daily Prayers as well as the Taraweh. And people can also plan to go for Hajj. Amin.

Muslims follow Government rules and regulations

Faced with this plague, Canadians in general and Muslims in particular have followed Government rules and regulations. When the Government of Canada prohibited gatherings of more than fifty people, masjid and madrasas temporarily closed. Muslim travelers who returned home from abroad obeyed the Government regulation to go into self-isolation without being monitored.

We recite the du'as (supplications) taught by the Prophet ﷺ

The Prophet ﷺ has said that there is great heavenly reward in visiting the sick. But no one is allowed to visit Coronavirus patients for fear that the disease might spread. This must be very tough for the families. Now all the hospitals have been temporarily closed to visitors. So we make du'a for the sick from home. All the necessary du'as have been compiled by Imam 'Abd-Rahman bin 'Umar al-'Attas نفعنا الله in Ratib al-'Attas, and by Imam 'Abdallah bin 'Alawi al-Haddad نفعنا الله in Ratib al-Haddad and Wird ul-Latif. We should also continue to recite "As-Salatu Kanzil A'zam" of Ghawth al-A'zam Ash-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani نفعنا الله, and the "Salawaat" of al-Habib Ahmad Mash-hur bin Taha al-Haddad نفعنا الله to strengthen our hearts. We should also recite Du'a Qunut at least a hundred times and beg Allah ﷻ to quickly eliminate this pandemic. The opening lines of Du'a Qunut are:

Allahumahdinaa fee man hadayt(a)
Wa 'afinaa fee man 'afayt(a)

O Allah! Guide us among those whom You have guided.
And heal us among those whom You have healed. Amin.

Schools have been ordered temporarily closed. Instead, there are online classes. Masajid and Islamic schools have online classes on Islamic studies. We had an online session on the fifteenth

night of Sha‘ban where we recited Surah al-Fatiha, Surah YaaSeen, Surah Ikhlas, Du‘a Nisf Sha‘ban, as well as this du‘a twenty seven times:

Astaghfirullah(a) li‘l mu‘minina wa‘l mu‘minat

I beg forgiveness from Allah for all the faithful Muslim men and the faithful Muslim women.

Appreciation of doctors, nurses and medical practitioners

We salute the efforts of doctors, nurses and medical practitioners. The whole world appreciates them. Some frontline medical workers have died of this virus while serving patients. We mourn their loss. May Allah ﷻ protect all the doctors, medical practitioners and those who have been afflicted with this virus. Amin.

We appreciate the advances that medical science has made. In a situation such as this where pharmaceutical companies have not yet found a medical cure for this disease, Muslim doctors as well as non-Muslim doctors who believe in God know that God listens to the prayers of the pious and as a result many Coronavirus patients do actually recover. Some people might say that there is natural healing. They should know that the natural healing has been created by the One and Only God, Allah ﷻ.

SubhanAllah (Glorified is Allah ﷻ)!

Now there are a sizeable number of Muslim doctors, nurses and health care workers in North America. As a result, medical professionals are much more aware these days about the comfort level of Muslim patients. For example, they are well aware that Muslim patients need to be cared for by a clinician and a nurse of the same gender. There is growing awareness of the sensitivities of people of all religious persuasions. We appreciate such growing awareness. Many hospitals now have a separate musalla (prayer room) for Muslims. Everything is not perfect but things are improving. And in Canada, many people are now committed to winning the hearts and minds of people. Canada today is very different than it was thirty years ago.

Al-Hamdu Lillah (All Praise is for Allah ﷻ).

The response of the Government of Canada

To stop the spread of this plague, the Government of Canada has ordered non-essential businesses to temporarily close, so you see only a few people on the streets. Opinion on this issue is divided. Some people say that the livelihoods of many people are lost and the poor are the most adversely affected. Others say that these regulations are essential to stop the virus from spreading. Yet other people paint doomsday scenarios which should not scare us. As Muslims we have to take precautions, be considerate of others and put our complete trust in Allah ﷻ.

The Government of Canada has responded to the crisis in a step by step manner for which it should be commended. The approach is to continuously educate the people. There is no curfew or a lockdown. Countries with trigger happy police can learn from the example of Canada. Canada’s police has shown that it is there not to harass people but “to serve and protect” them.

Some countries such as India have a complete lockdown. The Government of India had imposed a lockdown on Kashmir even before Coronavirus. O Allah! Ease the suffering of the oppressed Muslims of Kashmir as well as of the Palestinians and of the oppressed people everywhere. Amin.

Some other countries such as Kenya have imposed a curfew from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. Businesses close at 4 p.m. so that the poor workers who cannot afford bus fares and sometimes walk up to two hours to reach home, can reach home well in time.

Something positive that has come out of this is that bars have been closed. It has been reported that although as many men have been diagnosed with coronavirus as women, significantly more men have died from it than women. One reason is that men drink about five times more alcohol than women. Islam prohibits the consumption of alcohol. Countries such as the U.S.A. that had Prohibition (of alcohol) in the historical past should revisit that glorious history and come forward to Prohibition.

Some countries began to test people for Coronavirus early and it has been reported that countries which carried out more tests have controlled this disease better, so now other countries have embarked on more testing.

In some countries that have political prisoners, people have recommended that they should be released, especially those suffering in congested jails, the elderly, the sick with chronic debilitating or terminal medical conditions, the pregnant, those who are due for parole or pardon, and accidental victims of political arrests. All political prisoners should be released. Period. There should be no political prisoners. Period. Canada does not have any political prisoners. Canada has begun to release inmates. About two thousand have already been released. The milk of human kindness is flowing as it must.

Allahu Akbar (Allah is Supremely Great)!

Why does Allah ﷻ inflict such a disease?

The question arises: Why does Allah ﷻ inflict such a disease? We learn from the Qur'an that a calamity such as this is a test and a trial, and if Muslims bear it patiently with unflinching faith, then they will be rewarded by Allah ﷻ in the Hereafter.

From another verse of the Qur'an, we learn that such a calamity is a Divine punishment for sins of humanity. At the individual level, people commit many major sins such as murder, oppression, injustice, land grabbing, destruction of graves, bribery, fraud, financial corruption, stashing away billions in "tax havens", gang violence, lying, cheating, backbiting, greed, exploitation, waste, hypocrisy, sodomy, gay marriages, gay parades, adultery, fornication, prostitution rackets, drinking, use and abuse of drugs, gambling, obscenity, and pornography. May Allah ﷻ protect us from all this. Amin. We have to repent and sincerely resolve never to commit any of these sins again. We have to keep away from what Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ have prohibited us. Instead, we have to do more good deeds.

We learn from the Qur'an that God has given us so many bounties, and we cannot count all of them. For example, the air that we breathe has been given to us by Allah ﷻ. We should thank Him for this invaluable bounty. We cannot even thank Him enough for the two eyes He has given us. Instead of being grateful to Him, we commit all these sins. So if He punishes us, we only have to blame ourselves for our sins.

Committed Christians are also against these sins but they are not speaking out against some of them for the sake of political correctness. They should fulfill their duty of publicly speaking out against these vices.

Recommendations

We also have to clean our hearts of diseases such as arrogance, jealousy, conceit, vindictiveness, prejudice and evil thoughts.

As we have all been a little humbled, this is an opportune time to improve ourselves at both the personal and the national and international levels. Even the Pharaohs of today have been a little humbled.

At the national and international levels, countries must

- (a) stop injustice against the oppressed, and the ill-treatment of minorities, and resolve not to thief the resources of poor countries,
- (b) resolve never again to undertake bloodthirsty invasions of Muslim countries or fuel civil wars,
- (c) act against moral corruption by banning gay marriages, gay parades, “women’s marches” which promote lewdness, and gambling which destroys lives, God forbid,
- (d) bring to justice those who dabble in financial corruption and those who do “insider trading” and expose them, instead of letting them go with: “honey, you should not have done that”,
- (e) release all political prisoners, repent from torturing them and from the outsourcing of torture,
- (f) give up their political vindictiveness,
- (g) improve their judicial system as in many countries, the judiciary is a farce and a circus,
- (h) ban alcohol, as drunken driving is one of the major causes of road accidents,
- (i) stop polluting the earth and over-exploiting it,
- (j) abandon aping the decadence and filth of consumerism, and

(k) eliminate their weapons of mass destruction and stop worshipping money.

It is true that those with means and authority will use the long arm of the law to protect themselves. They should fear the punishment of Allah ﷻ in the Hereafter. May Allah ﷻ protect us from that. Amin.

The Prophet ﷺ has warned to beware of the cry of the oppressed. The oppressors still have time to repent and mend their ways.

There is selective criticism by the politicians. When their allies commit crimes, they are quiet but when their opponents commit the same crimes, they yell their lungs out. In the same way, at the individual level, the minions of the corrupt and the connected support their masters without any shame and tell you not to speak a word against them so that they can continue to wallow in their corruption.

The calamity of political alliances

Both Muslims and non-Muslims have killed and tortured Muslims. They have to repent and beg forgiveness from Allah ﷻ. Political establishments in some Muslim countries have taken political establishments in some non-Muslim countries as allies to fight against Muslims. Can there be a calamity greater than that? Given this reality, it is easy to understand why Coronavirus may be considered to be Divine punishment for these sins. May Allah ﷻ protect us from all these sins. Amin.

Conclusion

Islamic Relief Canada has written most tellingly:

“How do you isolate when you live in a refugee camp with thousands of people? How do you wash your hands frequently when you have no access to clean water? How do you join an on-line class when your class was bombed? In Syria, Gaza, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen – these are stark realities. Even though the shared struggle against COVID–19 brings us all together, it is not an equalizer. We must do our utmost to use our privilege to help protect those who are most vulnerable, because no one is safe unless we are all safe”.

May Allah ﷻ protect our Iman (Faith). Amin. May He bestow upon us taqwa (piety), sabr (patient endurance) and istiqama (steadfastness). Amin.

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