

ŞALĀH & CORONA VIRUS

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Question:

What is the view of the scholars of Dīn on the following matters?

1. An announcement has been made by some ‘Ulamā’ that people can come to the Masājid in limited numbers for the five daily Şalāh, i.e. for every Şalāh, three to five people will perform in Jamā’ah, whilst the rest of the people will perform the Şalāh at home. Similarly, for Jumu’ah Şalāh, a maximum of ten people can come and the rest of the people should perform Zuhr Şalāh at home. To what extent is this necessary in the light of the Noble Qur’ān, Sunnah and Islāmic Fiqh? Until today, we have been taught that there is no permission for those living nearby a Masjid to perform Şalāh at home without a valid reason. If a person performs Şalāh at home without a valid reason, then his Şalāh will not be valid and he will get the sin of abandoning the Jamā’ah. We ask you for the Shar’ī response in this regard.
2. Some people say that those who come to the Masjid for Şalāh, they should stand a metre distance apart from the others so that the effect of the illness does not spread to the others. In the light of the Noble Qur’ān and Sunnah, will the Şalāh performed in this way be correct? Will our Şalāh be done or not? We hope that you will respond with references from the Noble Qur’ān and Hadīth.

A few concerned Musallis

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Answer:

1.

(a) With regards to the matter at hand, Allāh Ta’alā says in the Noble Qur’ān,

حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ

«Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle prayer and stand before Allāh, devoutly obedient»ⁱ

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said in explaining this verse, “I had intended to instruct some youngsters to gather firewood, then I give the command for Şalāh to commence and for the Jamā’ah

ⁱ Sūrah Al-Baqarah: 238

to begin. Then, I would go to the homes of those who do not come for Şalāh in Jamā’ah and burn their homes. ”ii

The same Ḥadīth is narrated from Ibn Mas’ūd ؓ, Abū Ad-Dardā’ ؓ, Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ and others. Imām Tirmidhī ؓ said that this Ḥadīth is Ḥasan and Şaḥīḥ. Imām Tirmidhī ؓ says that this narration is proven from many Şaḥābah ؓ. All of them said that those who do not attend the Jamā’ah after the Adhān has been called out, without any excuse, their Şalāh is not done.

(b) Shaykh-ut-Tafsīr Maulānā Muḥammad Idrīs Kandehlawī ؓ writes in his Tafsīr, Ma’ārif-ul-Qur’ān under verse 114 of Sūrah Al-Baqarah,

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

«And who are more unjust than those who prevent the name of Allāh from being mentioned in His Masājīd and strive toward their destruction. It is not for them to enter them except in fear. For them in this world is disgrace, and they will have in the Hereafter a great punishment»

“This refers to stopping the name of Allāh ؓ being taken, whether in the heart, or by the tongue, or by the limbs. Not only this, but the person strives to render them empty and barren. Showing dishonour and destroying the Masājīd is outwardly destroying them, whilst preventing worship, the remembrance of Allāh ؓ, this is the inner form and the proverbial form of destroying the Masājīd.”iii

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī’ ؓ writes in his Tafsīr under the same verse quoted above, “The third aspect we learn is that whatever action is adopted to render the Masjid empty and barren is forbidden (ḥarām). Just as destroying the Masjid is addressed clearly in this verse, in the same way, it refers to creating all those means that will cause the Masjid to be rendered empty and barren. The meaning of rendering the Masjid barren is that people do not come there for Şalāh, or they come in decreased numbers. This is because, the objective of building the Masjid is not to decorate it, but it is to enliven Dhikr, Tilāwat and Şalāh. This is why the Noble Qur’ān states,

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ
الْمُهْتَدِينَ

«The Masājīd of Allāh are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allāh and the Last Day and establish prayer and give zakāh and do not fear except Allāh, for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided»iv

In a ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ؓ said that closer to Qiyāmah, the Masājīd of the Muslims will outwardly be beautiful and full of activity, but in reality, they will be barren. The

ii Tirmidhī

iii Ma’ārif-ul-Qur’ān vol.1 p.203

iv Sūrah At-Taubah: 18

number of those who come for Şalāh will decrease, or means for this decrease will be created. Sayyidunā ‘Alī ؑ said, “Honour of man lies in six things.” Three of them are listed here:

- i. Recitation of the Noble Qur’ān
- ii. Enlivening the Masājid
- iii. Building unity amongst friends that will help in the work of Dīn.^v

The summary of the two Tafsīrs is presented hereunder:

1. The Masājid are the houses of Allāh ؑ. The objective is that Allāh ؑ should be remembered therein, with the heart, tongue and limbs, like in Şalāh and Tilāwat.
2. The demand of honour as a human being is to enliven the Masājid and develop one’s imān.
3. The actions of Muslims involve the maximum number of Muşallīs coming for Şalāh, remembering Allāh ؑ in the Masājid and reciting the Noble Qur’ān.
4. Contrary to this, stopping people from coming to the Masjid, preventing them from worship and Şalāh, this is destroying the Masājid. This is censured in the verse.
5. Stopping the people from the Masjid is like the general destruction of the Masjid. Similarly, limiting the numbers of people or specifying the people to attend also falls under the purview of destroying the Masjid. This is great oppression.
6. The reasons and causes mentioned by those who stop and prevent the people from coming to the Masjid are not explained by the Sharī’ah, nor do we find any indication of them in the Nuşūş (clear texts).

(c)

Allāh ؑ says,

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنَاً وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ
وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ

«And [mention] when We made the House a place of return for the people and [a place of] security. And take, [O believers], from the standing place of Ibrāhīm a place of prayer. And We charged Ibrāhīm and Ismā’īl, [saying], "Purify My House for those who perform Tawāf and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer]."»^{vi}

Tafsīr ‘Uthmānī states:

‘When we stipulated the Ka’bah as a place of gathering for people and as a place of security because people get together there annually for Ḥajj and ‘Umrah, they perform Ṭawāf there, perform Şalāh and there are huge crowds. Those who perform Ḥajj and ‘Umrah, they will then be safe from punishment and the oppression of people. Perform Şalāh at Maqām Ibrāhīm during Ḥajj and ‘Umrah. We commanded Ibrāhīm ؑ and Ismā’īl ؑ to keep the Baytullāh pure for those performing Ṭawāf, Rukū’ and Sajdah.’

^v Ma’ārif-ul-Qur’ān vol.1 p.272

^{vi} Sūrah Al-Baqarah: 125, Mūdiḥ-ul-Qur’ān, Shāh ‘Abdul Qādir Dehlawī ؑ p.24

From this verse of the Noble Qur’ān we learn that the Ka’bah Musharrafah and all the Masājid of the world are places of gathering. At the Ka’bah Musharrafah, Ṭawāf is done and Şalāh is performed. People remember Allāh ﷻ there too. In other Masājid, Şalāh with Jamā’ah is held and Jumu’ah is performed. People remember Allāh ﷻ and recite from the Noble Qur’ān.

Who is the oppressor that stops the gathering of people at those places that Allāh ﷻ has made places of gathering?! Who is the oppressor that closes them, prevents the people from Ṭawāf and Şalāh? This can only be the greatest oppressors of the world and they are the greatest criminals too. May Allāh ﷻ bless the Muslims with the ability to use their intelligence and intellect. One should not come under the sway of the Jews and Christians and close the Masājid, stopping the different forms of worship. One should open it for all the Muslims. However, those from whom harm can come, they should be stopped.

Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ was asked about a person that fasts during the day, stands in worship at night, but he does not attend the Jumu’ah and Jamā’ah. He said, “He is in the fire.”^{vii}

Mujāhid ؓ says, “Those who turn away from attending the five times Şalāh and Jumu’ah, treating it lightly, their Şalāh will not be done.”

A narration from Rasūlullāh ﷺ says, “He who leaves three Jumu’ah due to negligence and laziness, Allāh ﷻ will place a seal on his heart.”

In short, there are severe warnings for the person that abandons the Jamā’ah Şalāh and Jumu’ah. However, those who are ill, or they have fear of illness, if they cannot attend the Jamā’ah, or Jumu’ah, there will be no sin on them. On the other hand, the person that does not have a valid shar’ī reason, and he stays away from the five times Jamā’ah due to faulty or defective belief, he will be a severe sinner. Firstly, due to his defective belief. Secondly, due to leaving the Jamā’ah.

It must remain clear that the meaning of faulty or defective belief is that it is stated in the ḥadīth that according to Islāmic belief, there is no contagiousness, i.e. it is not correct to believe that an illness can move from one to another. This is because every illness is the creation of Allāh ﷻ. The illness is subject to the command of Allāh ﷻ, whether it affects man or animals. It is the system of Allāh ﷻ that when He wills an illness to afflict someone, it will afflict him, not anyone else. If these illnesses are free to go wherever they want, they can go to everyone, but this is not the case.

Therefore, the area or locality in which the Corona Virus has spread, if it affects everyone, then everyone will die. However, it affects certain people, not others. When the illness is subject to the command of Allāh ﷻ, it does not afflict every single person. Whoever is subject to the command of Allāh ﷻ to be affected, it goes to him. Therefore, it is not a valid excuse to fear such an illness and not attend the Masjid for Jamā’ah and Jumu’ah, especially when all the Masājid are the houses of Allāh ﷻ. They are places of

^{vii} Tirmidhī

mercy, blessing, safety, security and reward. When a person will perform Şalāh in the Masjid, Allāh ﷻ becomes pleased, He becomes displeased when a person does not go to the Masjid and abandons the Jamā’ah. If the illness comes into the Masjid, it will be under the command of Allāh ﷻ. Period.

Allāh ﷻ instructs His servants to come for Jamā’ah in order for them to acquire mercies, blessings and great reward. He will not punish them because these illnesses come as punishment for the disobedient and polytheists and as a mercy for the believers. In addition, if this illness goes wherever it wants, on its own accord, then it will not be the creation of Allāh ﷻ - there is no proof for this. The proof establishes the contrary because the clear texts of the Noble Qur’ān and ḥadīth show that all illnesses are the creation of Allāh ﷻ and they follow His command. If it affects someone, it will be due to the command of Allāh ﷻ. There is no proof in the Noble Qur’ān and ḥadīth that shows illnesses coming into the Masājid. If anyone has doubt, then there is no consideration given to doubt in Sharī’ah in the case of definite and convincing circumstances. Conviction is not removed by doubt. With regards to this, the research of medical professionals will be considered when it does not contradict the Sharī’ah. If it conflicts with the Sharī’ah, it will be rejected.

2.

Due to fear for the Corona Virus, if a space of a metre is kept between people in the rows of Şalāh, then this contradicts the clear Sharī’ah texts. Therefore, no consideration will be given to this. The principle regarding the rows in the Masjid is that it should be like the rows of the angels in their worship and Tasbīḥ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ explained that when the angels worship and glorify Allāh ﷻ, they join one another in a row or rank and there is no space in between. Rasūlullāh ﷺ taught the Ummah that when standing in Şalāh, one should stand in a row, shoulder to shoulder format and there should be no space in between at all. This is because Shayṭān comes into the empty place. Allāh ﷻ does not like that Shayṭān has a share in one’s worship. The proof is the following narration, ‘Samurah Ibn Jundub ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Make your rows in Şalāh like the angels do by their deity.” We asked, “How do the angels make their rows when worshipping their deity?” Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Complete the first row, then the next. Complete each row, without leaving a space in between because when it is left empty, Shayṭān jumps in between and causes harm in your prayer.”

Anas ؓ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Join one another in the rows in sequence, do not leave a space in between, join shoulder to shoulder.” Then he said, “By the Being in Whose control is my life, I see that when you leave a space in the row, then Shayṭān comes in between like the kid of a goat.”^{viii}

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “Form your rows for Şalāh by joining each other, he who fills a space in order to complete a row, Allāh ﷻ will join him to Him. He who leaves a gap in

^{viii} Tirmidhī

between, Allāh ﷻ will keep him away from Him. Do not leave an empty space for Shayṭān.”^{ix}

The belief system of our government is that by joining the rows, the illness will spread, whereas the Masājid are not places of illness, but they are places of the mercy, blessings, safety and reward from Allāh ﷻ. Therefore, it will not be permitted to practice upon such principles. They are in conflict with the Sharī’ah and the Sunnah. If according to the medical practitioners, the illness can spread by gathering in this way, then it will be medical and human research. No consideration is given to this research when it conflicts the Noble Qur’ān and ḥadīth. Their research is limited to their intellect, which is of the level of doubt. However, the information given in the Noble Qur’ān and ḥadīth is based on divine revelation. There is no possibility of error in it. Hence, the definite information should not be abandoned for that which is doubtful. We have to look at Dīn from the sources of Dīn. It is not possible to understand Dīn from the intellect of animals.

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^{ix} Ibid