

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful

QUESTIONS FROM THE WEST ABOUT COVID-19

Answered by the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azeez Aal Shaykh

From Moosaa at-Taweel al-Amreekee to the Grand Mufti, the virtuous Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azeez Aal ash-Shaykh: *As-Salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullaah wa barakaatuh*. As for what follows:

In these days -the days of the Coronavirus Pandemic- Allah has indeed blessed us with good leadership, governmental leaders and scholars who love the Muslims, and the Muslims love them. They lead the people to safety and well-being, by the Permission of their Lord. Their cooperation in establishing safety protocols in the land of *Tawheed*, the land of the two sacred and honored mosques, the respected Kingdom of Saudi Arabia -may Allah protect it from every evil- is an exemplary thing, a role model for the entire world, and the praise is for Allah. People of all different religions and various languages notice this, so may Allah compensate you for your hard work and reward you with the best reward for what you do for your *Ummah*!

A matter that causes fear has indeed come to us, a very serious matter, and [about it] the people have differed in their views. And our Lord, the All-Knowing, the Ever Informed, has indeed guided us to what is befitting for us in these types of issues, with His Statement [which means]:

﴿وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِّنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوْ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ ۖ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ ۗ﴾

"And when there comes to them a matter of safety or fear, they spread it openly. Yet had they only referred it back to the Messenger and those in authority among them, those of them capable of extracting its ruling would have done so." [4:83]

So in order to implement this Noble Verse, and with due concern for unity, I present some important questions. I do believe that your answers to them will –by Allah's Permission- save your children of *Ahlu-Sunnah* in foreign lands from the differing that has befallen them, as you hold a position of trust with everyone. It is from Allah that I hope that we could benefit from your noble instructions.

QUESTIONS FROM THE WEST ABOUT COVID-19 ANSWERED BY THE GRAND MUFTI

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The First Question: How do we know exactly what the *nawaazil* (pending issues in need of verdicts) are, those which must be deferred to the senior scholars and people of authority? Are the *Fiqh* issues connected to the Coronavirus from those *nawaazil*?

[The shaykh's official response, dated 1442/4/22, will be in **BLUE**, as follows.]

[ANSWER] From 'Abdul-'Azeez ibn 'Abdillaah ibn Muhammad Aal ash-Shaykh to the respected Moosaa at-Taweel, may Allah grant him success. *As-Salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullaah wa barakaatuh*, and as for what follows the greeting:

Your letter has reached me, the one asking about five matters, so here is the response.

Firstly, whatever issues and *nawaazil* happen to people are to be returned back to the Book and the *Sunnah*, as the Exalted One says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥٩﴾﴾

O you who have believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those in authority among you. If you differ over any matter, then return it back to Allah and the Messenger if truly believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for a final determination. [4:59]

And whenever the issue is specific to some individuals, then the *Fuqahaa'* (those knowledgeable of *Fiqh*, i.e. Islamic rulings), the rightful people of *ijtihad* (deducing rulings from evidences), those who fulfill the requirements of *ijtihad*, implement their *ijtihad*, due to His Statement, the Most High:

﴿اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾

Follow what has come down to you from your Lord, and do not follow any helpers (or protectors) besides Him. Little do you remember! [7:3]

And whoever is not from the *Fuqahaa'* is to refer to the scholars, due to His Statement, the Most High:

﴿فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧﴾﴾

So ask the people of knowledge when you do not know. [21:7]

And whatever issues are connected to broad public concern are referred back to those in [official positions of] authority, those who consult with the people of knowledge and specialization [of specific relevant fields], as He, the Most High, has said:

﴿وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوِ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ ۖ وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٣﴾﴾

And when there comes to them a matter of safety or fear, they spread it openly. Yet had they only referred it back to the Messenger and those in authority among them, those of them capable of extracting its ruling would have done so. And had it not been for the Favor of Allah upon you, and His Mercy, you would have followed the Shaytaan, save a few. [4:83]

The Second Question: What should be done if we enter a mosque these days -the days of the Coronavirus-, and we find that the people of this masjid are not distancing themselves from one another, nor are they implementing the safety protocols of the authorities, in non-Muslim lands? Instead, they order those praying to come together and stand without gaps in the rows. Please instruct us, may Allah protect you from every evil.

[ANSWER] Secondly, keeping distance between the people who pray in the mosque is done for the purpose of avoiding the spread of the disease. It does not affect the validity of the prayer, and it is from what accomplishes [legislated] benefit and repels harm. Thus, if you enter a mosque where the people are not abiding by the protocols of safety requested by the authorities to prevent the spread of the disease, then it is upon you to advise those who maintain that mosque to have the people abide by the precautionary procedures required by the relevant authorities.

The Third Question: In the West, we have some doctors among the Muslims, people of *Sunnah* and [good practice of] Religion, people known for their love of Islamic knowledge and its dissemination. However, in these days specifically, they oppose the official Health agencies, saying that there is no need for the well-known protocols of safety which those officials instruct the people to observe, like distancing, wearing masks, etc., protocols that match or are close to the same ones chosen by the Muslim leaders. They say that the verdicts issued by the people of knowledge in the Muslim lands and the decisions made by their rulers are erroneous opinions, because they are based on blindly following global health organizations of the non-Muslims, and that they -those in such organizations- are people with evil agendas against the Muslims. This

stance has begun to spread among some of the youth, so what direction do you have for us and them?

[ANSWER] Thirdly, upon you is to abide by the safety instructions issued by the official authorities, those taken in order to prevent the spread of the disease. Furthermore, you must not subject the Muslims to punitive action by encouraging them to violate the instructions issued by the official authorities.

The Fourth Question: What should be our stance on those who talk about So-and-So, the government official, in their private gatherings, actually naming one of the authorities in the land of the Two Sacred Mosques, saying that he is causing corruption in the land, because he closes mosques and puts restrictive limits on those who come for *Hajj* and *'Umrah*, requiring them to follow harsh safety restrictions, which leads to the ruin of the sacred places [of worship].

[ANSWER] Fourthly, it is not permissible to speak ill of the authorities for instituting what they believe are efforts needed to prevent the spread of diseases. Instead, what is due to them is to be praised [for that] and supplicated for.

The Fifth Question: What is our stance on those who say that the governmental leaders in the Land of *Tawheed* have made decisions during this pandemic based on blindly following the West, without consulting the people of knowledge?

And I do apologize for the number of questions; however we are in a state of differing and dispute, and we are seeking a good way out, one pleasing and successful, from this trial, which is merely from the things that our Lord, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise, tests us with. It is a good trial, so that the Muslims would advise one another and differ [to a point], but then return back to the Truth, come back close to one another, and love one another for Allah's Sake, all of them together upon one single heart. And it is Allah that I ask to actualize that, by His Grace and Generosity. *Was-Salaam*. [Dated: 1442/2/18]

[REPLY] Fifthly, the rulers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are vigilant over matters of benefit for the Muslims and repelling harm from them. May Allah reward them with the best reward. Their way of doing things continues to include consultation with the people of knowledge in matters that arise, in order to know the [correct] legislative ruling.

Attached are a number of edicts and official decisions on the topic.

May Allah make us all successful in attaining what pleases Him, and may He aid us and you in what is good.

Was-Salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullaah wa barakaatuh.

The Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Chairman of the Council of Senior Scholars

General Chairman of Academic Research and Edicts

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IMPORTANT RESOURCES ON THE TOPIC:

PDF: [Original Arabic of this article with English translation, side-by-side](#)

PDF: [A Summary of Verdicts Issued by the Permanent Committee of Scholars Concerning the Coronavirus Epidemic \[Anwar Wright\]](#)

MP3 Audio: [Shaykh Saalih al-Fowzaan on the Obligation of Social Distancing During the Covid-19 Outbreak \[Phrase-by-phrase translation\]](#)

PDF: [Advice of Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Bukhari About Coronavirus](#)

Video: [Healthy, Realistic, Practical Optimism During the Coronavirus Outbreak \(Youtube\)](#)

PDF: [Fleeing From the Decree to the Decree \[Rahmaaniyyah, Abul-Hasan Maalik\]](#)

Video: [Don't Downplay the Seriousness of the Coronavirus! \(Youtube\)](#)

MP3 Audio: [Key Lessons About the Coronavirus \[Hassan Somali\]](#)

Article: [Social Distancing During These Times is an Obligation From Allah; It Only Increases Our Love for One Another](#)

PDF: [The Issue of Contagion - An Islamic Perspective \[Taqweem Aslam\]](#)

Article: [What Blessings Could Come From the Closing of Masjids?!](#)

Khutbah: [Coronavirus - How Muslims Understand it & Other Epidemics](#)