



The Irish Council
of Imams

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Benevolent, the Most Merciful

The Statement Issued by the Irish Council of Imams (3)

Re. The Development of COVID-19 and Its Impact on the Month of Ramadan

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds and may Allah's peace, blessing and mercy be upon the one sent as a mercy to all that exist.

The ICI would like to take this opportunity of these blessed days and send its congratulations to all Muslims on the near commencement of the month of Ramadan 1441HJ. We pray to Allah to bless you, us and the entire world with good and prosperity and mark an end to this plague and adversity. The ICF would like to stress the following points:

First: The Invalidity of Friday prayer offered at home because of the following:

1- The rule is that since it is a ritual, the methodology in which Friday prayer is established must be consistent to the way it is reported. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, says: "Establish your prayers the way you saw me praying." The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, established Friday prayer in a specific way illustrating in practice the command, i.e. earnestly hastening to it, mentioned in the Qur'an. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, did not offer it at home, despite availability. Had it been valid if offered at home, the Prophet,



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peace be upon him, would have definitely offered it, let alone the fact that none of the Companions and their Followers offered it even once in a way divergent to the reported way.

2- The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, says: "Should a new practice be introduced in the religion, it is to be rejected". Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. Offering Friday prayer at home is an innovation. Plagues hit people before us, yet none suggested offering it at home. Moreover, more than once congregational prayers as well as Friday prayers were suspended throughout the Islamic history. During suspension no one suggested offering Friday prayer in a way alternative to the reported way.

3- The methodology in which Friday prayer is offered, a source of pride, is one of Allah's graces on Muslims. In his book Zad-ul-Ma'aad, Ibn Al-Qayyim states that Friday prayer has thirty three distinctive characteristics e.g. assembly of a specified number of people, Iqamah etc. These distinctive characteristics will be lost if offered at home.

4- One of the repercussions of offering Friday prayer at home is killing its spirit. It would lead to the claim that building mosques as well as going to mosques are pointless. Then it will be enough to have a small mosque in every city that gives room to two people and an Imam and other people may pray at home or in their work places.

5- The Fiqh academies e.g. Islamic Fiqh academy, The ECFR, Al-Azhar Fiqh academy, Al-Azhar great Scholars Authority, the Saudi Great Scholars Authority, the International Union of Muslim Scholars,



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etc. issued a Fatwa stating that it is invalid to offer Friday prayer at home and if it so happened one must pray Dhuhr.

Second: The Invalidity of Friday prayer and Taraweeh prayers offered at home when led by an Imam online, TV, radio, live broadcast or any other means of communications because of the following:

1– As a prerequisite for joining a prayer led by an Imam, the Muslim scholars stipulate that both the Imam and the congregation he is leading should be in the same place, and that the congregation should be aware of the postures assumed by the Imam in a way that prevents ignorance and suspicion because in the case of ignorance or suspicion the prayer is invalid. They also stipulate that there should not be a big partition between the Imam and the congregation he is leading. Joining a prayer through live broadcast while being at home breaks all these stipulations, makes it impossible to reach the Imam and invalidates the prayer as expressed by the majority of the Muslim scholars. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, says: “The Imam is appointed so that he should be followed.” Agreed upon

2– Claiming that it is valid to join live Taraweeh prayer from home gives room to deactivating congregational prayers and their Islamic objectives e.g. gathering.

3– Since Fiqh academies issued Fatwas stating the invalidity of Friday prayers offered at home while following it on live or any of the means



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of communications, the same rule is more worth applying when it comes to supererogatory prayers.

Third: In light of the COVID-19 and the suspension of offering prayers in the mosques we recommend that you offer your Taraweeh Salah at home led by a member of your family, who is the most knowledgeable of the Qur'an. Allah will bless you with the reward of offering your voluntary Salah at home. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, says: "Establish your Salah at home for indeed, the best Salah is that which one offers at home unless it is the obligatory Salah." Reported by Muslim.

Fourth: Based on consultation with doctors and specialised experts and in light of a number of scientific studies attesting to the great bodily benefits and increasing one's immunity achieved by fasting, which are the most needed nowadays, it is not permissible for Muslims able to fast to break their fasting. Allah says "So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting." (Trans. 2:185).

However, there is concession for people suffering from health issues as their doctors state that fasting would cause them repercussions i.e. delaying their recovery or worsening their cases. People suffering from chronic diseases should offer a Fydia i.e. feeding one poor person per day. If it is not a chronic disease, then Allah says: "if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number (Should be made up) from days later." (trans. 2:184)



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In light of the spread of COVID-19, the ICI urges Muslims to adhere to health instructions that require social distancing, refrain from congregational Iftar and inviting others for Iftar.

The ICI also urge Muslims to renew their connections with Allah during this month and exert great efforts on various acts of worship, e.g. reciting the Qur'an, remembrance of Allah, charity, etc., to draw closer to Him.

We also encourage Muslim to adhere to the decisions taken by Irish authorities regarding staying at home, suspending performing rituals in mosques and refraining from gathering until the plague is terminated. We also warn against spreading hearsays that negatively affect public interest.

Signed:

22 Shaaban1441 H. Corresponding to 15/04/2020

Sheikh Hussein Halawa

(Chairman)

Sheikh Yahya Al-Hussein

(Vice Chairman)