

Shaykh Ibn Bāz on Abandoning Prayer in the Mosque While Sick With Influenza With the Claim of Contagion

Shaykh Ibn Bāz (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) was asked:¹

When a man suffers from what is called “influenza”—this being an illness despite which a man is still able to leave his house, though it is a “contagious illness” as the doctors say—would it be permitted for this man to pray in his house so that he does not harm or annoy others, using the analogy of the one who ate garlic or onions and was prohibited from coming to the mosque. [Keeping in mind that] the cold (zukām) is a compelling [type of] illness² and is not [like] food that a man eats through choice?

The Shaykh (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) answered:

الواجب على كل من استطاع أن يصلي في الجماعة من الرجال، أن يصلي في الجماعة؛ لقول النبي ﷺ: من سمع النداء فلم يأت فلا صلاة له إلا من عذر قيل لابن عباس ما هو العذر؟ قال: "خوف أو مرض". فإذا كان يشق عليه الخروج بسبب المرض، فهو معذور، أما دعوى العدوى فليست بعذر؛ لقول النبي ﷺ: لا عدوى ولا طيرة ولا هامة ولا صفر. أما من أكل ثومًا أو بصلاً أو كراثًا فإنه لا يجوز له أن يصلي مع الجماعة؛ لأن النبي ﷺ نهى عن ذلك وأمر بإخراجه من المسجد، حماية للمصلين من أذاه، وفق الله الجميع

It is obligatory upon everyone among the men who is able to pray in congregation to pray in congregation due to the saying

¹ Majmū‘ Fatāwā wa Maqālāt al-Shaykh Ibn Bāz (30/179).

² Meaning, it arises in him without his choice.

of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Whoever heard the call to prayer and did not come [to it], then he has no prayer, except he who is excused.”³ It was said to Ibn ‘Abbās: “What is the excuse?” And he said: “Fear or illness.”

So when it is difficult upon him to leave the house due to illness, then he is excused.

As for the claim of contagion, then it is not an excuse due to the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): “There is no contagion, no omen in birds, no omen in the night-owl and no omen in the month of Ṣafar.”⁴

As for the one who ate garlic, onions or leeks, it is not permissible for him to pray with the congregation because the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited that and ordered [the one who did that] to be expelled from the mosque in order to protect those praying from his harm, may Allāh grant success to all.

NOTES

1. In the above fatwā the Shaykh stated that fear of transmitting an illness (contagion)—to avoid harming others—is not a valid excuse for a sick person with an influenza or cold type illness to leave the congregational prayer in the mosque⁵, and he used as evidence the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ): “There is no contagion.”

The Shaykh distinguished between the issue of contagion and the issue of consuming garlic and onions as is apparent.

This would mean that if a man has the flu or cold and is still mobile, as in his illness is not severe enough to prevent him from walking around and leaving the house, then the claim of

³ Related by Ibn Mājah in Kitāb al-Masājid wal-Jamā‘āt (no. 793).

⁴ Related by al-Bukhārī in Kitāb al-Ṭibb (no. 5757)

⁵ And when this is in relation to the one who is sick, who fears transmitting the illness if he goes to the prayer, then it also applies to the healthy, who fears illness, he should not abandon the prayer for fear of that.

contagion is not an excuse for not going to the congregational prayer, since the Prophet (ﷺ) negated it and in contrast to that, he (ﷺ) prohibited the one who ate garlic and onions due to harm caused to those praying. Thus, the harm and annoyance of garlic and onions is real and actual whereas the claim of contagion is negated as it is mere presumption.

2. We explained in past articles that for those who affirm contagion, there are ways and means that can be derived from the texts such as the ḥadīth of the sick and healthy camels and the ḥadīth of fleeing from a leper and the ḥadīth of not going to a land of plague, and all of these ways and means refer to **actually sick people and actual sickness**, they do not relate to what is between healthy people, free of sickness.

Thus, sick camels are kept away from healthy camels, a person can keep away from a leper and a sick person if he wishes, and a person should not go to a land of the plague and subject himself to potential causes of harm.⁶ These broad principles can be implemented in relation to an epidemic.

Further, that any measures that go beyond what the Shari‘ah came with, that they are matters of ijtihād, and that rulers or scholars can be right or wrong in these affairs, close to the truth or remote from the truth due to the very nature of these affairs, and they are rewarded nevertheless.

However, it is the view of some scholars—who actually affirm contagion, let alone those who negate it—that going beyond what the Shari‘ah came with of precaution against what is dhāhir (apparent), that it starts to enter into the realm of omens and minor shirk, and that this is the way of the disbelievers, such as

⁶ As discussed in a previous article, the ḥadīths of the plague have no connection to the subject of contagion at all and it is the Messenger (ﷺ) himself who explained this ḥadīth for us through numerous other ḥadīths. For more details refer to: **“Higher Wisdoms in the Ḥadīth Regarding the Land of Plague”**, here: <http://cv2020.s3.amazonaws.com/hadith-plague-land.pdf>

what is found in the speech of **Shaykh al-Albānī, Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī** and **Shaykh Ḥamdān bin Sulaymān**.

Further still, that even in matters which are considered to be *nawāzil*⁷, viewpoints must be based on evidence, and given this, there are no evidences in the Sharī'ah, nor in medicine for lockdowns of entire populations, so-called “social-distancing” between the healthy and universal masking of the healthy.

In reality, these are inventions of the disbelievers and have no basis in science and medicine, save to make people “feel safer”, to “create safe spaces” and to help “remove their anxieties”. This being driven by speculative and false theories of disease. Key among them is the pseudoscience, sleight-of-hand trickery and fraud known as “virology” in its Darwinian framing which is driving policy and behaviour across the world today.

However, it is the case that nations may have entered into international agreements or treaties which require them to implement certain additional measures as part of those treaties.

Thus, they may require their subjects to act upon these particular measures that go beyond what came in the Sharī'ah, and the scholars, from the angle of pure Sunnah— which enjoins obedience to the rulers in that which is not disobedience to Allāh—having trusted the specialists of their land and their opinions, enjoin obedience to the rulers in these affairs.

⁷ An epidemic is not a new event that has never taken place before. Rather, the the rulings pertaining to it already exist in the Sharī'ah and its affairs have been discussed by scholars in the past. However, an excessive, exaggerated reaction to this type of event, beyond the guidance of the Messenger (ﷺ), may lead people to find themselves in new scenarios and situations that have not occurred previously. These affairs would require rulings, being from the *nawāzil*, having not occurred previously. For example, the issue of validity of prayer in congregation where gaps are left due to social distancing measures being implemented by the authorities. So here, the scholars would explain the ruling upon prayer done in this manner, whether it is valid or not, with their evidences, as this is not a scenario that has existed before.

And they, the scholars—at a person level, inwardly—may or may not agree with all of the measures, but from the angle of the Sunnah they support the ruler in his ijtihād and viewpoint, this being from the angle of maintaining order and unity, which is what we have consistently called to since March 2020.

Having said this, it is known and well-related from Shaykh al-Luḥaydān, that he neither wore masks nor maintained social distancing and nor was it of much concern for the students around him. The Shaykh is of the view of the negation of contagion and this is from the fruits of this view.

These things are baseless and are nothing but fabrications of the people of disbelief built upon their materialist pseudosciences where perfectly healthy people are turned into contagion. This promotes unwarranted fear, superstition and harbouring of omens, the very thing the Messenger (ﷺ) came to put an end to.

3. Since these are affairs of differing in both religion and medicine—such as views on contagion, theories of disease, injections, treatments and so on—then we have seen different responses, approaches and contrasting attitudes from nations and states. Even Islāmically, depending on views held by rulers and scholars in these areas, different approaches are possible.

What has been proven—when the different approaches of nations are compared and their results and effects are analysed—is that...

- national lockdowns,
 - universal social distancing,
 - universal mask wearing,
 - universal (experimental) injections
- ...are not backed by evidence and have proven useless.

This is demonstrated by what has amounted to large-scale experimentation upon the world's populations since March 2020 with respect to these affairs.

Whatever is presented as evidence to support these things by the people of disbelief and their institutions then it is suspect because there are clear conflicts of interest and huge financial motives that are in operation, as is evident.

It does not take too much intelligence to realise that if a fourth or fifth booster injection is required, then the injection can't really have been "95%" effective in the first place as claimed by the liars, fraudsters, snake-oil conmen and convicted criminal corporations who manufacture them.⁸

And as for the claim of Darwinian viruses mutating, being subject to natural selection pressures, and "evading immunity" and so on—used to justify more and more injections and other related purposes—then these are the *khurāfāt* (heresies, superstitions) of the *kuffār* dressed up as science, and we lament the fact that Muslims have fallen victim to these lies.

4. The point being made here, in light of the above speech of Shaykh Ibn Bāz (رحمته الله) is that there is a difference between presenting the choices, opinions, decisions of rulers and scholars in disputed over affairs as *ijtihāds* in which they can be right or wrong, but rewarded nevertheless, and whose decisions are respected and order and unity maintained, and between claiming that their views or policies are somehow synonymous with the legislative *ḥukm* of Allāh, such that, "Allāh Himself obligated social distancing" upon this *ummah*, for example, and what is similar to that of lies upon Allāh and His religion.

⁸ The large pharmaceutical corporations have a long and established history of fraud, bribery, falsification of research, concealing data and so on. They have been fined repeatedly, to the tune of billions of dollars, after convictions. However, due to the immense profitability of their enterprise, they can afford these hefty fines as they are only a fraction of the profits they are able to make before their fraud and bribery is even detected, let alone exposed and brought to justice through the courts. Further, they have ownership or influence over media, journals and politicians who lobby for them, as well as their own agents in the institutions that are supposed to be regulating them.

Further, the claim that only one nation among the nations somehow has a worldwide monopoly on science and medicine with all the differences therein and it is obligatory to follow the policies of that nation, even if you live thousands of miles away in another nation whose authorities may have different views and policies.

So this article and others preceding it are from this angle, to counter these exaggerations and false claims which have led to people becoming confused and to burdens of sin wrongly placed on Muslims who live in places, nations or states which do not implement all of these policies and who have different views and approaches, as may be found in places like Sweden, Norway, Tanzania, Madagascar, Florida and others.

5. Worthy of mention in this context is that this fatwā of Shaykh Ibn Bāz shows—among other things—that statements of scholars are not evidences in religion in disputed affairs, rather evidences in religion are sought for the statements of scholars, it is not the other way around.

As Ibn Taymiyyah said:

وليس لأحد أن يحتج بقول أحد في مسائل النزاع وإنما الحجة النص والإجماع، ودليل مستنبط من ذلك تقرر مقدماته بالأدلة الشرعية لا بأقوال بعض العلماء؛ فإن أقوال العلماء يحتج لها بالأدلة الشرعية لا يحتج بها على الأدلة الشرعية

“It is not for anyone to use the speech of anyone in disputed issues. Proof lies in text and consensus, and an evidence derived from that whose foundations are corroborated with Sharī‘ah evidences, not through the speech of some scholars. Sharī‘ah evidences are sought for the statements of the scholars, and their statements are not used against the Sharī‘ah evidences.”⁹

⁹ Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (26/0).

So while you are free to choose a view in affairs that are disputed over, you cannot use the mere speech of a ruler or scholar itself against the view of others, as that speech in itself does not constitute Sharī'ah evidence, even if we are agreed that one must respect the ijtihād of a ruler from the angle of maintaining order and unity and that if you choose to remain in a country which has implemented certain policies, then obviously you are going to have to abide by them otherwise you will not be able to function in that society.

6. In short, there is enough to show that the handling of a pandemic¹⁰ in what goes beyond the guidance brought by the Messenger (ﷺ) is a matter of ijtihād.

For mankind has greatly differed in these issues, and a ruler may be correct in some affairs, wrong in others, granted success in some areas, but not in others.

And while we may have varying opinions, there is no disagreement as to the necessity of maintaining order by respecting the ijtihād of the ruler and complying with regulations upon the principles of obedience being in that which is ma'rūf, and in whatever does not entail disobedience to Allāh.

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¹⁰ The current alleged pandemic is illusory and is manufactured by fraudulent tests to generate “cases” out of healthy people, on the backbone of Darwinian evolutionary theory with respect to imaginary “viruses” that are said to be subject to mutation and natural selection.