

CHC NATIONAL ULAMA JOINT STATEMENT ABOUT JUMUAH, JAMA'AH AND MORE DURING VIRUS OUTBREAK

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The Central Hilal Committee of North America, an umbrella organization consisting of Ulama from 23 states of the US, release the following joint statement regarding the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19. This statement was unanimously adopted after extensive detailed discussions in light of the evidences found in the Quran and Sunnah.

Guidance for Masajid

Masajid should not be closed for obligatory prayers and Jumu'ah unless there is a government order to do so in a particular area. In such a case, the particular masjid under the jurisdiction of the respective authority should comply with local authorities.

Masajid should remain open for Jumu'ah and obligatory prayers as long as the government authorities permit. All mandatory protocols should be followed as far as gathering size and curfew timings. To accommodate the number of attendees, masjid should hold multiple jama'at at staggered timings. Imams and khatibs are humbly requested to deliver brief Khutbahs, as Ammar ibn Yasir ؓ narrates: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ordered us to deliver brief sermons" (Abu Dawood, 1106).

If there are further restrictions applied which do not allow one to leave the home, Jumuah can be performed in small jama'at of at least four adults. The regular salah should also continue in jama'ah at home. The help of Allah comes through patience and salah (al-Baqarah: 45).

What if Jumu'ah is Canceled in My Local Masjid?

Jumuah salah is an obligation directly mentioned in the Noble Quran upon every adult, sane, able, healthy, male Muslim (al-Jumuah:9). Individuals who meet the requirements of the obligation of Jumu'ah should form their own small Jumu'ah prayers. The gathering should be small (minimum four) and the Khutbah and Salah should be short. Please contact an alim regarding the minimum requirements for the Jumu'ah salah.

Disease Outbreaks

Pandemics and plagues afflicted humans in the past just as it is now. Our Deen tells us that these events are the result of our own actions. Allah ﷻ says, "Whatever hardship befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed, while He overlooks many (of your faults)." (al-Shura: 30)

Allah, the Almighty, has also given us solutions to such calamities: istighfar and tawbah from all sins. We must turn back to Him and mend our ways. The Quran informs us, "And Allah was not to send scourge upon them while you (O Prophet), were in their midst, nor would Allah send

scourge upon them while they are seeking forgiveness.” (al-Anfal: 33) Abu Musa al-Ash’ari ﷺ commented that we had two means of safety, one has left us, i.e. Rasulullah ﷺ, and the other remains: istighfar. Also, Ali ﷺ said, "Calamities befall only due to sins and are alleviated only by tawbah." Tawbah entails (1) stopping the sin, (2) having remorse over it and (3) making a sincere promise not to repeat it. Tawbah should be done as often as possible.

Trust in Allah ﷻ

“Nothing can ever reach us except what Allah has destined for us. He is our Master. And in Allah alone the believers must place their trust.” (al-Tawbah: 51) It is a firm belief of a Muslim that no disease can spread without the permission of Allah, the Most Great. If He, the Exalted, chooses to bring sickness to someone, out of his complete wisdom, He may do so without any contact with anyone else. If He, the Magnificent, chooses to protect someone from sickness, He may do so even if they are in direct contact with a sick person. It is necessary to rely upon Allah in these matters and avoid panic. The principle taught in Hadith is: “that which missed you could not have afflicted you, and that which afflicted you could not have missed you” (Abu Dawud, 4700). We must continue our daily du’as, recite Quran regularly and increase our ‘ibadat.

Precautions and Preventive Measures

Our Deen commands us to take precaution and avoid situations which may lead to doubts and weakness in beliefs. It is a commandment of Allah, directed toward His servants, to take preventive measures for protection from illnesses. This is proven by numerous examples from the Quran and hadith. Cleanliness is a hallmark of Islam (Tirmizhi, 2803). Islam gives emphasis on washing hands, keeping the entire body, all belongings and all property clean. Muslims should take preventive measures prescribed by local authorities in addition to paying special care for cleanliness.

Guidance for Individuals

Those individuals not required to attend Jumu’ah, for example: the sick, travelers, women and children, should not attend the Jumu’ah Salah. Extra precaution should be taken by the elderly. The discretion of healthy individuals exercising extra precaution should also be respected. All mandatory guidelines should be complied with.

Social media is a major cause of the spread of misinformation, panic and falsehood. This is the first global social media epidemic - or ‘infodemic’. It’s not as simple as just deleting - the misinformation is causing confusion and doubt - and doubt cannot be deleted. Muslims are commanded by Allah ﷻ to seek out the proper avenues when faced with disturbing news. Allah ﷻ said: “When news concerning peace or fear comes to them, they go about spreading it. Had they referred it to the Messenger and to those having authority among them, the truth of the matter would have come to the knowledge of those of them who are able to investigate.” (al-Nisaa: 83) We encourage all to take breaks from social media and spend that time turning to Allah ﷻ.

May Allah, the Most Kind, protect all human beings from this and all calamities. Ameen!