

A Message from Shura NY's President

Bismillahi Rahmani-Raheem

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Assalamu alaikum wa Rahmatul-Allahi wa Barakatuhu,

As all of you know, the deadly novel Coronavirus has impacted the globe. It has severely affected life and the economy in many parts of the world. Despite several approaches being put into place around the world to contain the spread of the pandemic, social distancing has been found to be the most practical and effective solution in containing this virus. Places that have been badly hit by COVID-19 have resorted to various measures, whether obligatory or voluntary, to maintain this virus. Such measures include city lockdowns or closing down colleges, schools, and businesses.

Majlis Ash-Shura of New York, in coordination with national and local Muslim organizations in the US, strongly recommends that mosques immediately suspend all activities including the five daily prayers and Friday prayer for at least two weeks. This decision was based on fatwas in an overwhelming consensus by Islamic scholars locally, nationally, and internationally. Our scholars identified the risks of transmitting the disease to congregations through prayer as high risk, as these transmissions can then spread to families, households, and the overall Muslim community.

We know that many small mosques depend on Friday collections to cover their expenses. We ask the community to support the fund that the Majlis Ash-Shura of New York has started to support as many mosques and communities as possible during the period of closure. Your contributions will go a great length in protecting and securing our beloved sacred spaces.

Ultimately, we remain responsible in front of Allah (swt) to protect the vulnerable in our community. May Allah forbid, preventable casualties and spread of disease due to irresponsible behavior will place blame on the Muslim community by both the public and the Almighty. As a result, the priority for mosques at the present moment is to do everything possible to avoid being a cause of spreading this disease and death among its congregation and society.

My dear brothers and sisters of the Muslim community: I request you to stay home and avoid crowded places, including avoiding close contact such as praying in Jama'at., until this pandemic is over. It is not only for your safety, but for that of your family's, friends', coworkers' and society's as well. Whether the person is or is not exposed to the virus, he or she should stay away from people and practice social distancing.

During this difficult time, many in our community will suffer financial hardships due to the inability to work or conduct business activities. As a result, we are working to collect available resources to help our community's needs. This is a time for our community to be united, show compassion, and support each other. Our community must fight against this epidemic together.

As Ramadan is around the corner, we must prepare for worst case scenarios. Such as the indefinite closure of our mosques and the suspension of taraweeh prayers and community iftaars. At this time, it is incumbent upon us all to call on Allah (swt), make sincere du'a, ask for forgiveness and ask the Almighty to protect us all and get through this period of difficulty with ease. We must utilize this time efficiently, to renew our relationship with our Lord.

On an individual level, I urge everyone to make the most out of this time by engaging with the Deen. Plan a study schedule with your family, watch lectures by Islamic scholars, read and memorize the Qur'an, and seize the opportunity to make extra prayers and dhikr. As schools are closed, engage your children in Islam and teach them about the beloved Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w), while supporting them to do their school work and assignments.

Our Muslim community has faced many challenges, and this remains yet another one. However, we must continue to make the most out of every situation. We must rise to the occasion and keep our community safe at all costs.

I ask Allah to help us overcome this challenge, safeguard our elders, heal the sick, guide us all and protect us all from this harmful virus.

Dr. Abdelhafid Djemil
Majlis Ash-Shura of New York, *President*