



Coronavirus fatwas

Friday prayer

1.

Being physically and mentally healthy is a prerequisite for attending the Friday prayer. Someone who fears a worsening of his illness due to his praying in congregation is not obliged to attend the Friday prayer.

2.

Missing the Friday prayer is permissible ("mubah") under the following circumstances: For fear of enemies, in heavy rainfalls and mud, in case of similar obstacles which could cause harm to people, and for the reason of a disease with high proliferation and risk of further deterioration. If such a disease affects the general public, Friday prayers should be suspended in favour of protection and safety as well as to minimize any risks and dangers. This measure is commensurate with the decree of Allah.

3.

If the Friday prayer can not be performed for the above-mentioned reasons, the believer should perform the normal Noon prayer instead. As for the other conditions and obligations of the Friday prayer, it is not permissible to perform the Friday Prayer in small groups. Islam wants to make things easy and does not want to place difficulty.

May Allah protect us and all of humanity from every calamity.



Coronavirus fatwas

Burial in the coffin

part one

The conditions for an Islamic casket burial require that the body of the deceased comes into contact with the soil. The deceased is transported to the burial site in a casket, but then interred while being clad only in his shroud.

The reason for this rule lies in the human condition: Man was made from clay and this is where he should return to after death. This process is commensurate with the fitra (innate human nature).

An interment in a casket made from wood or marble would prevent the body from getting into contact with the soil, which in turn contradicts both the fitra and the common Islamic funeral rites. So, while it is not considered entirely haram (forbidden) to bury the deceased with a casket, this practice is still highly disliked (makruh) and therefore only permissible under particular circumstances.



Coronavirus fatwas

Burial in the coffin

part two

The authoritative works on fiqh specify those circumstances as follows:

1.

When a casket burial is required by law

2.

When the ground is too wet or putrefactive to bury the deceased without a casket; in this case, a casket made from marble or metal is permissible

3.

When the deceased has died from a contagious disease and there is a risk that it will spread if the body interred without a casket.

4.

When a woman has died who has no mahram to lower the deceased into the grave; in such a cases, burying her in a casket is actually recommended (mustahabb), since her body must not be touched by a non-mahram male.

Some Muslim scholars recommend to put some earth into the casket.

Regarding the above-mentioned exceptions, it would possible to bury Muslims, who have succumbed to the Corona-Virus, in a casket.



Coronavirus fatwas

Performing the funeral prayer over a deceased who has not been ritually washed

part one

Washing, shrouding and interring a deceased as well as performing the funeral prayer over him are considered obligatory and a fard kifayah-provision. If enough members of the community discharge this obligation, the remaining Muslims are freed from the responsibility.

In the Qur'an, Allah teaches man how to bury a deceased. After Adam's son had killed his brother and did not know what to do with the body, Allah sent to him a crow, who scratched the ground. He said: *"O woe to me! Have I failed to be like this crow and hide the body of my brother?"* At various points, the Qur'an indirectly emphasizes the necessity for a proper burial.

As a general rule, the deceased has to be washed, shrouded, and buried after the funeral prayer was performed over him.

In exceptional cases, the deceased can be buried without the prior ritual washing. Ibn Abidin states that it is not permissible to dig up the deceased after the burial to make up for the washing.



Coronavirus fatwas

Performing the funeral prayer over a deceased who has not been ritually washed part two

According to some Muslim scholars, "exceptional cases" are defined as:

The incompleteness of the body, i. e. missing of a significant amount of the body parts. According to the Hanbali and Shafi'i school, the found remains are washed and shrouded before the performance of the funeral prayer. This opinion is in line with the actions of the Prophet's companions. According to Imam Malik and Imam Abu Hanafi, the washing is not required if most parts of the deceased's body are missing.

Lack of water; if there is not enough water to wash the deceased or if there is a risk of harming the remains through the washing, a dry ablution (Tayammum) is sufficient. If it is entirely impossible to touch the body, it is permissible to sprinkle some water on it from a distance. According to Ibn Abidin, in such a case the funeral prayer is performed without the prior washing.

Martyrdom; Martyrs, who died in a war, were neither shrouded nor was the funeral prayer performed over them. The Prophet said about his companions, who had fallen in the Battle of Uhud: "Do not wash them, because each of their wounds and every drop of blood spilled will smell like musk on the Day of Resurrection." And the Prophet did not perform the funeral prayer over them. According to Imam Abu Hanifa, martyrs must not be washed. However, he considers it permissible to perform the funeral prayer.



Coronavirus fatwas

Martyrdom in Islam

Martyrdom in Islam is twofold:

1.

Those, who have fallen in Allah's way, are considered as martyrs in this life and the Hereafter. They are neither washed or shrouded nor is the funeral prayer performed over them.

2.

Those, who have died from an epidemic, in a foreign land, or on the path of seeking sacred knowledge (ilm). They are considered martyrs in the Hereafter, where they will be rewarded.

They are washed and shrouded, and the funeral prayer is performed over them. However, they do not reach the state of the first kind of martyrs.

The brothers and sisters who succumb to the Corona-Virus will be counted among the second kind of martyrs, and Allah knows best. If possible, they should be washed and shrouded, and the funeral prayer should be performed over them. If, however, this may turn out to be impossible due to the risk of contagion, one should contend oneself with what can be done.



Coronavirus fatwas

The burial of a deceased without the funeral prayer

part one

It is not permissible to bury a deceased without the prior performance of the funeral prayer. However, in such a case it is considered permissible to perform the funeral prayer at the grave like the Prophet did for one of the Ansaar.

The schools of fiqh

1. Abu Hanifa

If the funeral prayer has not been performed for legitimate reasons, it will be made up at the deceased's grave, provided the body has not yet decayed.

2. Imam Malik

If it turns out that the funeral prayer has not yet been performed, before the deceased is completely buried, the corpse is taken out of the grave again to perform the funeral prayer over him. If, however, the burial is complete and not too much time has passed (i.e. the corpse is deemed to be putrified), the funeral prayer can be performed at the grave.



Coronavirus fatwas

The burial of a deceased without the funeral prayer

part two

3 - Imam Shafi'i

The funeral prayer can be performed at the grave. A corpse that has been buried without a prior washing and/or face towards the Qibla can be taken out from the grave again to perform these acts given that the corpse is not yet in a state of putrefaction.

4. Ahmad ibn Hanbal

The corpse can only be taken out of the grave, washed, shrouded and prayed over in three cases:

He was not buried face towards the Qibla.

No funeral prayer had been performed over him.

No more than one month has passed since the burial.

However, the funeral prayer must be performed under all circumstances. In such cases there are no requirements concerning the number of people in the congregation and one Muslim is enough to perform the prayer. This is based on the fact that the companions performed the funeral prayer over the Prophet one by one and not in congregation.



Coronavirus fatwas

Ruling regarding cremation

As already mentioned, the Islamic funeral rites require the deceased to be washed, shrouded, interred, and the funeral prayer to be performed over him. These rules indicated in the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunna, and abided by Muslims until today. This procedure has many wisdoms to it, especially with regard to the protection of human dignity, remembrance of death and afterlife, health, environmental protection, etc.

Other forms of burials like cremation are impermissible in Islam. The Prophet said: "Breaking a deceased person's bones is like breaking the bones of a living person." That means it is not allowed to harm a dead body by breaking its bones. By analogy, cremation is also forbidden.

If there is a risk of infection from a deceased who had caught the coronavirus, stronger disinfection and isolation measures (e. g. through casket burials) should be taken to prevent contagion. If, however, local authorities introduce new measures and/or methods which contradict Islamic funeral rules, there is nothing that can be done about it.

May Allah, the Healer, grant healing and recovery to all people.

And Allah knows best.