

SOME OF THE MANY WAYS IN WHICH COVID 19 HAS AFFECTED MUSLIMS FROM ACROSS THE WORLD.

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All Muslims from across the world and everyone else came to be affected over several months by COVID 19. Many came to lose their loved ones, and many need to provide care for those who came to be left with serious or not so serious health problems. In months and years to come as health experts tell us many will continue to suffer from poor health and many from serious or not so serious mental health problems.

Besides health-related problems the pandemic also dented our daily religious practices. We could not for months offer our Namaaz in our Masajid and when this became possible, we had to keep our distance from other namazis as prescribed by health authorities and by Governments. The pandemic put a stop to our Tawih prayers and our Eid-ul-Fitr Eid-ul-Adha prayers and we could not go for Umrah or for Hajj.

The Virus helped put an end to our shaking of hands as well as embracing our relatives and friends and gathering in groups for religious or social reasons and the wearing of face coverings made it impossible for us to smile when we saw a loved one, a friend, an acquaintance or any other fellow Muslim or some one who belonged to another religious persuasion.

The pandemic also brought along with it a big economic downturn. Countries from across the world came to face economic problems as the spread of the Virus led to the closing down of most manufacturing and all types of business activities. In many countries those dependent on agriculture could not harvest their crops as they could not get farm workers to help with the harvesting. Exporters of livestock from wealthy countries to Saudi Arabia for Qurbani suffered as the Hajj pilgrimage came to be restricted to very few people. Exporters of livestock and cattle herders from some of the African countries suffered more as exporters of livestock could not export the livestock they had bought and the cattle herders could not sell their cattle as there were no buyers for what they wanted to sell. Many thousands of daily wage earners from the less developed countries lost their jobs so did factory workers, airport workers and pilots, restaurant and hotel workers and all those dependent on the tourist industry. Whilst some predictions by economists tell us that everything will be 'normal' within months others do not sound very hopeful.

The Virus also dealt a big blow to education. It forced Governments across the continents to shut down their education providing institutions. As Muslims our young persons missed out on acquiring secular education for several months as well as religious education. Our children could not and in many places, they still cannot

attend their local madressas or their dar-ul-ulooms. Most of those who were hoping to graduate from universities or dar-ul-ulooms during the present academic may not be able to do so.

Our socio-religious practices too came to suffer. We could not and still cannot have big engagement parties and big weddings for our sons and daughters and our Janaza prayers for our loved ones too came to be restricted to a few persons. We could not and still cannot visit our relatives and friends in their own homes or visit those who are admitted to hospital for treatment.

Whilst many workplaces, places of learning and places of worship have gradually started re-opening and functioning the fear of the Virus continues to haunt all of us irrespective of where we live or what we do. The Virus has certainly not left us. It keeps on coming back and we keep on having lock downs and restrictions placed on our movements.

The general feeling among experts who know a lot about Viruses tell us that whilst we are trying to move towards some form of normality what we all should expect is a new normal. In other words, COVID 19 has brought along health problems which are likely to stay with us for at least the foreseeable future. It has greatly disrupted the world's economic order. The sufferings caused by this will be with us for many years to come. It disrupted the provision of education both religious and secular education. The loss of the months of education will be with us for many years to come and the disruption it brought to our social and religious practices will be felt by us for many years to come.

What we have said up to now will not be new to most of our readers. We also sincerely feel that many of our brothers and sisters will be much better informed on the prevalence of the Virus and the many ways in which it has affected people across the world. Our reason for stating or restating what is already well known to many is to draw our people's attention to the following:

1. We Muslims now have more Muslim brothers and sisters who will need financial and other forms of assistance to help them cope with the losses they have suffered. We must also not forget the followers of other beliefs. Like our Muslim brothers and sisters they too will need assistance and we must also, if we have the means to support them.
2. There is also a great need for us Muslims to turn towards seeking cures for the illnesses and diseases we humans from time to time suffer from. We should give up the dependency culture we all suffer from. We all want to stay healthy and we all try to seek assistance from well qualified health professionals. We feel as Muslims we have a rich history of providing health care through our UNANI method. We feel there is a great need to revive this practice as well as engage in research to find cures for the illnesses and diseases we all now suffer from.