

▪ SOME LESSONS FOR ALL FROM THE SPREAD OF CORONA VIRUS- COVID 19

ISMAIL AHMED LAMBAT (MANCHESTER)

Since last Ramadhan we Muslims like everyone else have suffered from many man-made and natural disasters. Some suffered from wars, some from inter-racial troubles, some from droughts, some from heavy and many from unseasonal rains as well as from swarms of locusts and now we have the Corona Virus -Covid-19 which is moving or has already moved across the globe with tragic consequences for many. The epidemic has brought with it many challenges for governments of all countries, for the medical profession, for health care providers and for all humans living on this earth. For us Muslims the epidemic, we feel has come as an eye opener. We Muslims must sincerely believe that all these adverse happenings have come our way to teach us many good and very meaningful lessons and make us turn to our CREATOR for help. We hope our experiences and our sufferings and sufferings of our brothers and sisters will help us Muslims to become better practising Muslims and all others of other faiths to move closer to their faiths. We hope our sufferings as Muslims will make us think about our weaknesses as Muslims and help us turn towards the ALMIGHTY ALLAH and repent and ask the ALMIGHTY ALLAH to help all Muslims and everyone else to overcome the sufferings and anguish which have become part of our everyday lives.

All the adverse happenings have certainly made many of our Muslim brothers and sisters as well as others poor and more will join them in days, weeks and months to come. From what we know many of our brothers and sisters lost their family members and in many cases the bread winners of their families. Others lost their businesses or jobs, and many became homeless, many contracted illnesses and many became physically and mentally weak from the stresses and sufferings they were forced to endure.

Covid-19 besides bringing along the sufferings and mental anguish for everyone also brought along the need for social isolation and the need for keeping our distance from others to help contain the spread of the virus. The need for social isolation and the need for keeping our distance from others also helped bring about the closures of all education providing institutions, offices, factories, shops and all

places of worship. In brief, the virus helped bring to a sudden end our everyday activities, our pursuit of education, our employments and worshipping and our incomes as it paralysed nearly all aspects of our normal everyday lives.

Our need for social isolation as well as keeping our distance from others has made a very big impact on our daily activities as Muslims. It put a stop to our need to pray our Namaaz with Jamaat at our local Masajid, put a stop to our gatherings at our local masajid for bayaans, helped bring to a halt our wish for going for Umrah and could also stop us from going on our Hajj pilgrimage. The need for our social isolation and keeping our distance from others has also affected our funeral arrangements, offering Janaza prayers and the laying to rest of our brothers and sisters and it could also stop us from offering our Tarawih prayers at our masajid.

As we all know most of our older persons already live isolated from the other members of their families and communities and this compulsory isolation should not make isolation for them a permanent way of life. Our need for offering our Namaaz because of the need for social isolation at home too must not become a permanent practice. We feel as soon as the need for social isolation is over, we must make all the necessary efforts to get our older and younger brothers to join the others at their local masajid for their daily Namaaz. We also hope and pray that by the time of Hajj the epidemic will have receded and those wishing to fulfil this big act of worship will be able to do so.

Whilst those who had planned lavish weddings for their children may feel sad, unhappy or angry as they cannot invite all the guests they had planned to do. We feel they should thank the ALMIGHTY ALLAH for helping them to stop from engaging in activities which go against the expectations of our religion. Besides this those who have postponed the weddings of their sons and daughters to later dates to allow them to fulfil their desires to have big weddings should try to follow the examples set by those who decided to go ahead with the NIKAH of their children in the presence of a few family members. We feel small weddings can and should become the norm for all our Muslim brothers and sisters wherever they may be living or whatever amount of wealth they may have or whatever social positions they may hold.

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With the current sufferings of Muslims as well as others in mind should we Surti Sunni Vohras just sympathise with those who lost their family members, their loved ones and their friends or lost their livelihoods or their homes or should we think more about helping our unfortunate brothers and sisters in more sustainable