

Bismillah Alrahman Alraheem.

Praise be to God and peace and prayers are upon his beloved Prophet Mohammad.

Brothers and Sisters,

May peace and mercy be with you.

This is the translation of the second lecture in a series Shaikh Mahmood has named COVID-19.

This lecture will focus on the following question.

Are pandemics, tragedies and natural disasters a punishment from God?

When the Coronavirus first appeared in China, some jumped into claiming it as a punishment from God because of mankind injustice, corruption, murder and aggression toward one another. Those who are claiming this pandemic as a punishment are basing it on their own conceptions. Allah informed us that He is the most Gracious and most Merciful; from Surah 2 (Al-Baqarah) verse 143 "Surely God is the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful toward mankind). From this verse we can clearly see that Allah referred to mankind and not just Muslims. Mankind, no matter who they are, or what they look like, or what color they are, or what language they speak, or what ideology they follow or what religion they believe in, are all one human race. Natural disasters and pandemics don't discriminate between who you are or what you believe in. Yet, what people lose sight of; this is the time to stand together and do our part as citizens of this planet.

While researchers, scientists, doctors and health officials are working day and night to find a way to deal with this dangerous virus and save us all, we need to look at all of this from a compassionate and a humanitarian perspective. We are all brothers and sisters from the same human race. Allah said in the Quran Surah 4 (An-Nisa) verse 1: "O Mankind, be conscious of your Sustainer, who created you out of one living entity" Allah also said in Surah 49 (Al-Hujurat) verse 13 "O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you may come to know one another." This is the time where people should do all in their power financially and otherwise to offer support and relief to their fellow humans irrespective of religion, race or nationality and to do so with kindness and compassion. It is also the time to acknowledge the importance of science. Science is the way we progress and advance and it is the way we are liberated from misconceptions, delusions and superstitions.

Some of God's wisdom behind natural disasters, pandemics and other calamity that we might face, is to remind us of how weak we are and how much in need of His Almighty mercy. What we can learn from this pandemic? With all of our civilization and advancement in science we stand vulnerable in front of something that can't be seen with the naked eye. So, no matter how much we know, this reminds us of God the All Knowing. With all of the great science we have achieved, we are given something to remind us of how limited our knowledge is in front of the Almighty God the All-knowing. This reminds us of a verse in the Quran, Surah 17 (Al-Israa) verse 85 "And of Knowledge, you (mankind) have been granted very little." Also in the Quran Surah 42 (Fussilat) verse 53: " We will show them our signs in the universe and in themselves so that it becomes clear to them that this [revelation] is indeed the truth" Also in Surah 74 (Al-Muddaththir) verse 31 "And none can comprehend thy Sustainer's forces save Him alone"

As we can see, this pandemic could be a reminder for us all that no matter how much we advance in science and technology we shouldn't lose sight of our spiritual and moral side. Our spiritual and moral side is important to protect our principles, values and to strengthen the relationship with our creator; and to commit to our basic ethics such as social justice, living in peace and protecting human dignity; and to build our collaboration on the basis of piety, devoutness and righteousness.

This could also be a reminder of the existence of a Higher Power. The vast universe with its precise scenery, mechanisms and movement, couldn't have created itself or came into existence accidentally. Indeed, there must be a Great creator, with Majestic characters of All Knowing, Perfection and Wisdom. A Creator that Has the Power to perfect the Creation of the universe. Allah said in the Quran Surah 52 (Al-Tur) verse 35-36 "Were they created by nothing or were they their own creators? And have they created the heavens and the earth? Nay, but they have no firm belief." The evidence of the presence of God can't be counted and this virus yet another evidence that there is a creator. The virus, a small thing that can't be seen with the naked eye infects hundreds of thousands of people all over the world, and this is happening while we live in a period where we were blessed with the advancement of knowledge. We live in a period where we were confident that we could depend on our knowledge to face every calamity while, then comes this pandemic to remind us that no matter how we advance we may become, our knowledge and power is still limited, That we need to get back to our Lord, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate; and God the creator, the sustainer, the one who grants life and can take it away and the.

This is a reminder that we should always connect with our Lord and seek refuge in Him and ask for His Protection and Support. Our human nature when we are faced with a calamity of any kind is to seek a helping hand. So, imagine you have a firm belief that God, the creator of the universe, is there with you at all times and in all situations; this will for certain translate into tranquility and serenity that will help you to face any situation. God has freed you not depend on others to reach him; you can reach him anytime and anywhere. This manifest itself in the form of prayers that you can do or say. Allah said in the Quran Surah 31 (When the waves engulf them like shadows [of death], they call unto God, sincere [at that moment] in their faith in Him alone; but as soon as He brought them safe ashore, some of them stop half-way [between belief and disbelief]." Also, Surah 6 (Al-Anaam) Verse 42 "Yet when the misfortune befell them, they didn't humble themselves." God also says in Surah 35 (Fatir) verse 15 "O mankind, it is you who stand in need of God, whereas He alone is self-sufficient"

So, Natural disasters, pandemics and other calamities could come as a warning from our Lord for what we did wrong to ourselves and our society and to remind us who to seek refuge in. To also take a second look at how we live our life as individuals and societies and make changes to get rid of corruption and injustice and to create an equitable world that brings justice to everyone whether a believer or not. Allah said in the Quran, Sura 42 (Ash-shura) "Whatever calamity may befall you will be an outcome of what your hands have wrought, and He pardons much". In the hadith, from Aisha Radiya Allah Anha, said, I asked the prophet may peace and prayer be upon him, about pandemics and he told me that it is a reminder from God. God sends it to whomever he wills and that it is a mercy to the believers; and whoever is infected by it and stays in his place (follows health professional guidance) with patience and acceptance that nothing will happen except by the will of God, his reward will be that of a martyr." So how can this be a mercy to the believers, it increases their status in the sight of God, if they are patient. It also could come, just like any other test of the believers, to forgive their sins. And in the Hadith by Imam Muslim that Abdullah ibn Masood came to the prophet, may peace and blessings be upon him,

and the prophet was sick. Abdullah said "O prophet of Allah, you are going through some excruciating pain? And the prophet replied Yes, I am going through twice as much pain as two of you can handle, So Abdullah asked the prophet,so you have twice the reward then and prophet replied yes. And the prophet followed by saying when a Muslim go through pain, Allah will drop his sins like a tree drops its leaves." In the Bukhari from the Hadith narrated by Abu Huriarah that the prophet peace be upon him said "The hardship on a believer is in himself, his children and his money until he meets his Creator sin free"

What was narrated in increasing the status of a believer? In the narration of Abud Dawood that the prophet peace be upon him said "If a believer, was destined for a specific status, and didn't reach with his deeds, God will test him in his body, wealth and children and will give him the patience to deal with it, until he reaches the statues that was destined for him"

My brothers and sisters, from all what we have said in this lecture, we can't say that this pandemic, natural disasters or any calamity is a punishment from God and that is because God is the most Merciful in the Quran from Surah 2 (Al-Bagarah) verse 143 "Surely God is the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful toward mankind).

What we described above can lead us to say that only God knows the wisdom behind what is happening. So, it could be a reminder or an admonishment for what people have done to themselves and to others and this applies to both the believers and the non-believers. It could also be a mercy from God to wipe our sins and raise our status as believers. We as Muslims are not the judges; The One who Judge with His Wisdom and Knowledge is God without any partners to His Judgment and without any judgment superseding His. An when he wills for something to happen, All He has to do is say "Be, and it is"

We pray and ask Allah to protect us all from this calamity and to heal the sick. He is the one that have the power to do so. Brothers and sisters please pray for us all.

If you have any questions, please message us at askus@idrismosque.com