



## **Spirituality in a Time of Crisis: Responding to the Coronavirus from the Islamic Tradition**

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In the Islamic tradition, tribulation is viewed as a mercy and a blessing in that it provides an opportunity to reflect and renew our faith and strengthen our relationship with God through worship and acts of charity.

### **Coping with Crisis**

As both physical and spiritual beings, we need to address both aspects of our nature to stay healthy and to better cope with any challenge for the good of ourselves, our families, and our communities. We support ourselves spiritually by increasing our *tawakul*/reliance on God, which, as both the Qur'an and Hadith repeatedly remind us, is one of the best protections in a time of tribulation.

*Say, "Never will we be struck except by what God has decreed for us; He is our protector." And upon God let the believers rely. (Qur'an 9:51); God is sufficient for us and the best Disposer of affairs. (Qur'an 3:173); We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient. (Qur'an 2:155); If God intends good for someone, He afflicts him with trials. (Hadith)*

### **We fortify faith in times like these, for God has promised to respond to those who call on Him:**

*And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me, indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. (Qur'an 2:186); Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of God: for without doubt in the remembrance of God do hearts find satisfaction. (Q13:28)*

### **Here are some things we can do to strengthen ourselves spiritually:**

- Fulfilling ritual obligations such as daily prayers and use worship to manage and center your daily routine.
- Building humility and softening the heart through *dua* (supplications), recitation of the Qur'an, particularly Surat Yaseen (chapter 36), and fasting if we're able to do so.
- Getting closer to God through *dhikr* (remembrances of God) and reciting *wird* (litany). We've included several under resources.
- Joining a community of believers, by (re)connecting with scholars that are teaching our tradition, and (re)joining a community of believers for study and friendships.

### **Building and inspiring fellowship and community in a time of crisis**

According to Islamic tradition, all humans are from *Bani Adam*, literally meaning the tribe or children of Adam and Eve, the parents of all humanity. Despite our differences, we are all part of a global community and it is incumbent upon us to care about those who are most needy and vulnerable in society. Neighbors have a special place among the obligations a Muslim has towards others, as evidenced by numerous Qur'anic verses and Hadith. These obligations become even more paramount in a time of crisis when others' lives may literally depend upon us.

*Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in God, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves. (Qur'an: 2: 177); The Merciful bestows mercy upon those who are merciful. Therefore, show mercy to those on earth and the One in heaven will show mercy upon you. (Hadith); He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while the*



*neighbor to his side goes hungry. (Hadith); The best companion to God is the best to his companions, and the best neighbor to God is the best to his neighbors. (Hadith)*

This pandemic is unprecedented in modern history as a tribulation that impacts everyone on earth. We need to remind ourselves of the importance of kindness, compassion, charity, and service. Take this opportunity to:

1. Practice patience and kindness first and foremost with your own family members who may be the only people you are able to see right now and who will be in extra need of forbearance. Especially in need of support are those engaged in child and elderly care at home
2. Use social media, texting, or calling to reach out to loved ones, friends, and those who may be isolated on an ongoing basis. Call or reach out to at least one new person daily.
3. Check in on the elderly and offer to purchase groceries, run errands, or pick up medications for them.
4. Support and express gratitude to our first responders and essential workers by word, deed, and dua.
5. Donate your *zakat* or *sadaqa* to charities helping the most vulnerable and at risk. See list below.

### Reflecting on gratitude and faith in a time of crisis

One of the many lessons of crisis and tribulation that Muslim sages and scholars have emphasized is an enhanced appreciation for the many blessings in our life that in good times we often take for granted. The term *Alhamdulillah* or “Praise be to God” is a reminder that all the bounties we enjoy emanate from God. These include health, food, shelter, and security, all of which most people are still in possession of during this present crisis; this crisis teaches a greater empathy for those suffering from much greater tribulations. Gratitude not only enables us to see the good in any situation but also inspires us to work for positive change and to serve those who are in greater need.

*If you count the favors of God, you could not enumerate them. (Qur’an 16:18); So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me. (Qur’an 2:152); And your Lord proclaimed, “If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor].” (Qur’an 14:7); Wondrous is the affair of the believer for there is good for him in every matter and this is not the case except for the believer. If he is happy, he thanks God and thus there is good for him. If he is harmed, he shows patience and thus there is good for him. (Hadith)*

### Conclusion

Let us take this occasion to remember all our blessings, to return to God, and to work for positive change. For as a famous Hadith says, *even if the Day of Judgement comes while you are planting a tree, keep planting it.*

### Resources

#### Videos:

[“From Iman to Ihsan and Reflections on the Pandemic: Shaykh Walead Mossad”](#); [A Spiritual Response to the Coronavirus: Shaykh Mokhtar Maghraoui](#); [CelebrateMercy Coronavirus Crisis Webinar: Various scholars](#)

#### Supplications (*Dua*), Remembrances (*Dhikr*), and Repentance (*Istighfar*)

[Duas for tribulation](#); [Duas for istighfar \(forgiveness\)](#); [Al-Wird Al-Laṭīf of Imām al-Haddād](#); [Video of recitation of Al-Wird Al-Laṭīf of Imām al-Haddād](#); [Wird During Pandemics by Shaykh Abdullah bin Biyyah](#)

#### Charitable organizations

[CelebrateMercy](#), [Penny Appeal](#), and [ICNYU’s COVID-19 Financial Hardship Grant](#); [ICNA Relief Corona Virus Relief](#)

#### General

[“7 Ways to Face Your Trials with a Positive Heart”](#); [“12 Reasons for Thankfulness to God”](#); [“10 Things Children Can Learn from the Coronavirus”](#)