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## IRSYAD (RELIGIOUS GUIDANCE) ON PERFORMING IBADAH DURING HAZE SEASON

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### Introduction

1. Islam places great importance on welfare and well-being of humankind. Hence, when faced with difficulties and calamities<sup>1</sup>, Islam provides its followers with remissions and reliefs to help ease them from their sufferings.

Allah s.w.t has said in the Quran:

(يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ)

*Allah intends for you ease and He does not want to make things difficult for you.*  
(Al-Baqarah: 185).

And also:

(وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ)

*And He has not laid upon you in religion any hardship.* (Al-Haj: 78).

### Ruling on congregational prayers (solat jama'ah) and Friday prayers in harmful weather

2. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. has established the principles of congregational prayers in cases where harmful or hazardous situations or weather conditions prevail. There is a hadith of the Prophet s.a.w. that was narrated by Imam Bukhari and Muslim, from Ibn Umar r.a, that translates as follows:

*The Prophet s.a.w. had instructed the muezzin to call for prayer (azan), and afterwards (after the usual azan), he asked the latter to call out: "It is*

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<sup>1</sup> In order to determine if a particular difficulty is recognized from a syariah perspective (so that it would entitle one to the remissions and flexibilities provided in the syariah), one must first refer to the guidelines that have been set. These guidelines must be in line with the main objectives of the syariah itself, which would be the preservation of one's religion, life, descendants, property and lineage. And because of that, when a difficulty threatens the preservation of any of these, it would then be recognized as a situation that calls for an effort to relief one from the difficulty.

*beseeched that you establish your prayers at home”, and this happened during a cold night, or when it rained during travels.”<sup>2</sup>*

3. Through this hadith, the Prophet s.a.w. has actually demonstrated two situations that would permit us to suspend the obligation of congregational prayers, and these two situations are: in the event of very heavy rain, or cold weather that could be detrimental. Although the hadith mentioned only these two situations, scholars have explained that this hadith extends to more than just these two circumstances. According to Imam An-Nawawi, it is not limited to only these two situations, but it is also meant to ease the ruling on congregational prayers at mosques whenever a situation arises that would make it hard for one to perform them. And the ruling for this concession is not restricted to only obligatory prayers in congregation at the mosques, but it also comprises of all types of congregational prayers, including Friday prayers, Tarawih prayers, and so on.

4. Imam An-Nawawi explained in his book Al-Majmuk :

إن باب الأعذار في ترك الجمعة والجماعة ليس مخصوصا بل كل ما لحق به مشقة شديدة فهو عذر.

*Which means: Verily the chapter that expounds on the various factors of state of difficulties ('uzr) that would make Friday prayers and congregational prayers excusable, is not limited (to only what has been stated in the hadth), but anything that would cause one to experience great difficulties would be considered as 'uzr as well.<sup>3</sup>*

5. Based on this, Imam An-Nawawi again mentioned in his book Raudatut Talibin:

كل ما أمكن تصوره في الجمعة من الأعذار المرخصة في ترك الجماعة، يرخص في ترك الجمعة.

*Any reason that could be considered valid (in the shariah) to make congregational prayers excusable would also be considered as a valid reason to make Friday prayers excusable.<sup>4</sup>*

6. Imam Ibn Abdil Barr further deliberated on the different factors that would allow for the obligation of Friday prayers to be suspended:

فالعذر يتسع القول فيه وجملته كل مانع حائل بينه وبين الجمعة مما يتأذى به أو يخاف عدوانه أو يبطل بذلك فرضا لا بدل منه فمن ذلك السلطان الجائر يظلم والمطر الوابل المتصل والمرض الحابس وما كان مثل ذلك.

<sup>2</sup> Hadith narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari, no. [632] and Imam Muslim, no. [1633].

<sup>3</sup> An-Nawawi, Al-Majmuk, juz 4, pg 384.

<sup>4</sup> An-Nawawi, Raudatu Al-Talibin, juz 1, pg 146.

(The term) ‘Uzr has a more encompassing meaning (or what we have been referring to as ‘valid reasons’). In essence it refers to all situations that would prevent one from being able to perform Friday prayers, for example in dangerous and harmful situations, or in the fear of injustice or oppression, or situations that could suspend one from an obligation that no one else can do on his/her behalf (fardhu ‘ain). Amongst these ‘uzr (valid reasons) would be the fear of tyrannical authorities that would commit injustices and oppressions, continuous heavy rain, illnesses that disable one from going, and so on.<sup>5</sup>

## General Guidelines

7. Based on the hadith (Prophetic traditions) and the scholarly opinions that we have mentioned earlier, Office of the Mufti thus opines that **it is permissible for Muslims to not come for Friday prayers and other congregational prayers at the mosques, when the haze has reached a hazardous level that could be detrimental to their health, and could possibly even threaten their lives.** This is especially for children, elderly individuals, or those who have illnesses like heart and respiratory problems. These people are encouraged to take precautionary measures and to lessen their outdoor activities.

8. However, for those who decide on not performing Friday prayers, it is obligatory upon them to substitute it with *zuhur* prayers. It has to be emphasized here that the obligation for compulsory prayers remains in this situation.

9. Muslims in Singapore and the mosques here are urged to carry out all worship and religious activities at home, or in covered areas within the mosques, as far as possible. This is also in line with the spirit of Islam that encourages its followers to take precautionary measures to prevent from falling ill. As mentioned in the Prophetic hadeeth:

مَنْ تَصَبَّحَ بِسَبْعِ تَمْرَاتٍ مِنْ تَمْرِ الْمَدِينَةِ : لَمْ يَضُرَّهُ سِحْرٌ ، وَلَا سَمٌ .

*Those who eat seven dates from the city of Madinah every morning, will be saved from sorcery and also poison.*<sup>6</sup>

10. May Allah s.w.t. bestow upon us the perseverance to face these challenges in life, and to preserve us in good health and wellness, now and in the hereafter.

## OFFICE OF THE MUFTI, ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS COUNCIL OF SINGAPORE

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<sup>5</sup> Ibn Abd Al-Barr, Al-Tamhid, juz 16, pg 243.

<sup>6</sup> Hadith narrated by Imam Bukhari dan Muslim