

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPLICATION AS A COMPONENT OF RELIGIOUS COPING WITH COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Dear Sir,

Management of a pandemic like current COVID-19 requires a holistic approach, consisting of prevention, treatment, social support and emotional management (Ashraf et al. 2020). For decades, religion has provided explanations and answers to existential questions and queries that can emerge during a pandemic. This characteristic of religion has helped communities in finding answers and meanings to their confusions (Hashmi et al. 2020). Religious coping is the use of religious beliefs or practices to reduce the emotional distress caused by loss or change (Koenig 2007). Herein, we present our observations about religious coping with COVID-19 pandemic in our country to emphasize the importance of supplication as a component of religious coping.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted religion and faith in different ways. Religion has always played a role of the balm for the soul, and the regular religious participation is associated with better emotional health outcomes (Kowalczyk et al. 2020). Lucchetti et al. (2020) examined 485 participants from all regions and they found that there was a high use of religious and spiritual beliefs during the COVID-19 pandemic and this use was associated with better mental health outcomes. Lower levels of worrying were associated with greater private religious activities, religious attendance, spiritual growth and with an increase in religious activities; lower levels of fear were associated with greater private religious activities and spiritual growth and, lower levels of sadness were associated with spiritual growth. Finally, hope was associated with all religiosity and spirituality variables in different degrees. Ashraf et al. (2020) reported that during this difficult timing of COVID-19 pandemic, when there is a lot of stress, fear and confusion, Islamic teachings can be very helpful in mitigating these conditions.

Using daily data on Google searches for 95 countries, this research demonstrates that the COVID-19 crisis has increased Google searches for prayer (relative to all Google searches) to the highest level ever recorded. More than half of the world population had prayed to end the coronavirus. Prayer searches rose at all levels of income, inequality, and insecurity, but not for the 10% least religious countries. The rise is due to an intensified demand for religion: We pray to cope with adversity (Bentzen 2020). In our country, performance of obligatory prayers in congregation including Friday salah was not performed in all masjids between 16 March 2020 and 29 May 2020. During that time (for 2.5 months), imams supplicated to Allah just after azan of isha everyday and just after azan of dhur on Fridays by using

central speaker system due to COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of people attended imams' supplications at their home and work. Currently, prayers are performed in masjids in congregation in accordance with social distance. On the other hand, much many people including families, patients, patients' relatives and healthcare workers have continue to supplicated to Allah in personally and/or congregation, because Allah commands people to supplication as follows: Belief necessitates supplication as a certain means of securing needs, and both human nature has an intense desire for it, and Almighty Allah decrees, *Say: My Sustainer would not concern Himself with you but for your supplication*, (The Holy Quran Chapter 25 [Surah Al-Furqan]: ayat 77) which has the meaning of: What importance would you have if you did not offer Me supplications? He also commands: *Call upon Me and I will answer you* (The Holy Quran Chapter 40 [Surah Ghafir]: ayat 60) (Nursi 2012). Since man is subject to endless tribulations and afflicted with innumerable enemies despite his boundless impotence, and suffers from endless needs and has innumerable desires despite his boundless poverty, after belief, his fundamental innate duty is supplication. As for supplication, it is the basis of worship of Allah and servitude to Him. Man came to this world to be perfected by means of knowledge and supplication (Nursi 2012). Supplication provided different degrees of spiritual, mental and physical relaxation in the people, depending on the rank of their faith.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that religious coping including supplication was important for most people during COVID-19 pandemic in many cultures in the world; therefore, we strongly suggest that religious coping should be supported and encouraged by government administrators and health professionals should also be trained for religious/spiritual care.

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