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TEN GUIDELINES for Prevention of Epidemics

عَشْرُ وَصَايَا
لِلْوَقَايَةِ مِنَ الْوَبَاءِ

‘Abdul-Razzāq bin ‘Abdul-Muḥsin al-Badr
(May Allah forgive him and his parents)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Introduction

All praise is due to Allah; the One who responds to the desperate when they call upon Him, rescues the distressed when they cry to Him, removes all evils and relieves all afflictions. Hearts do not live except by His remembrance, nothing happens except by His permission, no adversity is removed except by His mercy, nothing is protected except by His protection, nothing hoped for is attained except by His facilitation, and no happiness is achieved except by His obedience.

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Him alone; He has no rival or match; Lord of the worlds, the deity of the first and the last, and the Sustainer of the heavens and earths.

I bear witness that Muḥammad is His Slave and Messenger, the one sent with the Clear Book and Straight Path; may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, his family and companions.

To proceed: These are some beneficial guidelines that I would like to remind with on the occasion of the fear and panic of people these days from the pandemic called Corona.

We ask Allah (ﷻ) to alleviate every harm and calamity from us and Muslims wherever they may be, to relieve us of every hardship and adversity, and to protect us all by what He protects His righteous slaves with. Indeed, He is the Custodian of that and capable of it.



Abū Huraira
CENTER

(1) What is Said before a Calamity Befalls

On the authority of ‘Uthmān bin ‘Affān (رضي الله عنه):

سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: « مَنْ قَالَ: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ، ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ لَمْ تُصِبْهُ فَجَاءَةٌ بَلَاءٌ حَتَّى يُصْبِحَ، وَمَنْ قَالَهَا حِينَ يُصْبِحُ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ لَمْ تُصِبْهُ فَجَاءَةٌ بَلَاءٌ حَتَّى بُسِّيَ » .

I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, “If anyone says three times:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ
وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

‘In the name of Allah, when Whose name is mentioned
nothing on earth or in heaven can cause harm,
and He is the Hearer, the Knower,’

he will not suffer a sudden calamity till the morning; and if
anyone says it in the morning, he will not suffer a sudden
calamity till the evening.”

[Narrated by Abū Dāwūd and others]



(2) Frequently Saying:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.”

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَذَا النُّونِ إِذ ذَّهَبَ مُغْضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُشَجِّي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾﴾

“And [remember] when the Man of the Whale (Yūnus) stormed off in a rage, thinking We would not restrain him. Then in the [veils of] darkness he cried out, ‘There is no deity except You; exalted are You! Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.’ So We answered his prayer and rescued him from anguish. And thus do We save the believers.”

[Sūrah al-Anbiyā’ (21):87-88]

In his *Tafsīr*, Ibn Kathīr (رحمته) comments on Allah’s statement:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ نُشَجِّي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾﴾

“And thus do We save the believers.”

“It means when they are in difficulty and they call upon Us and repent to Us, especially if they call upon Us with these words at a time of distress.”



Abū Huraira
CENTER

Then he mentions a ḥadīth in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

« دَعْوَةُ ذِي النُّونِ إِذْ دَعَا وَهُوَ فِي بَطْنِ الْحُوتِ: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ، لَمْ يَدْعُ

بِهَا رَجُلٌ فِي شَيْءٍ قَطُّ إِلَّا اسْتَجَابَ اللَّهُ لَهُ. »

“The supplication of Dhul-Nūn (Yūnus) when he was in the belly of the whale was:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

‘There is no deity except You; exalted are You.

Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.’

No one ever prays to his Lord with these words for anything except that He will answer his prayer.”

[Narrated by Imām Aḥmad and Tirmidhī]

Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمته الله) says in his book *Al-Fawā'id*:

“The hardships of this world are not repelled by anything like *Tawḥīd*, which is why the Supplication of Distress is through *Tawḥīd*, and the supplication of Dhul-Nūn (Yūnus) which no distressed person prays with except that Allah relieves his distress is also through *Tawḥīd*.”



(3) Seeking Refuge from the Hardship of Calamities

On the authority of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه):

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَتَعَوَّذُ مِنْ: جَهْدِ الْبَلَاءِ، وَدَرْكِ الشَّقَاءِ، وَسُوءِ الْقَضَاءِ، وَشِمَاتَةِ الْأَعْدَاءِ.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to seek refuge (in Allah) from: the hardship of calamities, being overtaken by destruction, being destined to an evil end and the enemies rejoicing at our misfortune.

[Narrated by Bukhārī]

Also, on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه):

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: ((تَعَوَّذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ جَهْدِ الْبَلَاءِ، وَدَرْكِ الشَّقَاءِ، وَسُوءِ الْقَضَاءِ، وَشِمَاتَةِ الْأَعْدَاءِ)) .

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Seek refuge in Allah from: the hardship of calamities, being overtaken by destruction, being destined to an evil end and the enemies rejoicing at our misfortune.”¹

[Narrated by Bukhārī]

¹ Translator’s note: This would be done by saying the following supplication:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ جَهْدِ الْبَلَاءِ، وَدَرْكِ الشَّقَاءِ، وَسُوءِ الْقَضَاءِ، وَشِمَاتَةِ الْأَعْدَاءِ

“I seek refuge in Allah from the hardship of calamities, being overtaken by destruction, being destined to an evil end and the enemies rejoicing at our misfortune.”



(4) Regularly Saying the Supplication of Leaving the House

On the authority of Anas bin Mālik (رضي الله عنه):

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ: « إِذَا خَرَجَ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ فَقَالَ: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ » ،
قَالَ: « يُقَالُ حِينَئِذٍ: هُدَيْتَ وَكُفِّيتَ وَوُقِّيتَ، فَتَتَنَحَّى لَهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ، فَيَقُولُ لَهُ شَيْطَانٌ آخَرُ: كَيْفَ لَكَ
بِرَجُلٍ قَدْ هُدِيَ وَكُفِّي وَوُقِّي » .

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “When someone leaves his house and says:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ، لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

‘In the name of Allah, I trust in Allah;
there is no might nor power except with Allah,’

it will be said to him, ‘You are guided, defended and protected.’
The devils will then go far from him and another devil will say,
‘How can you deal with a man who has been guided, defended
and protected?’”

[Narrated by Abū Dāwūd]



(5) Asking Allah for Well-being in the Morning and in the Evening

On the authority of ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه):

لَمْ يَكُنْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَدْعُ هَؤُلَاءِ الْكَلِمَاتِ حِينَ يُمْسِي وَحِينَ يُصْبِحُ: اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَمُوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي دِينِي وَدُنْيَايَ وَأَهْلِي وَمَالِي، اللَّهُمَّ اسْتُرْ عَوْرَاتِي وَآمِنْ رَوْعَاتِي، اللَّهُمَّ احْفَظْنِي مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِي وَعَنْ يَمِينِي وَعَنْ شِمَالِي وَمِنْ فَوْقِي، وَأَعُوذُ بِعَظَمَتِكَ أَنْ أُغْتَالَ مِنْ تَحْتِي.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would never fail to utter these supplications in the morning and in the evening:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَمُوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي دِينِي وَدُنْيَايَ وَأَهْلِي وَمَالِي، اللَّهُمَّ اسْتُرْ عَوْرَاتِي وَآمِنْ رَوْعَاتِي، اللَّهُمَّ احْفَظْنِي مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِي وَعَنْ يَمِينِي وَعَنْ شِمَالِي وَمِنْ فَوْقِي، وَأَعُوذُ بِعَظَمَتِكَ أَنْ أُغْتَالَ مِنْ تَحْتِي

“O Allah, I ask You for well-being in this world and in the Hereafter. O Allah, I ask You for pardon and well-being in my religious and worldly affairs, and my family and my wealth.

O Allah, cover my weaknesses and set at ease my dismay.

O Allah, protect me from in front of me, from behind me, from my right, from my left and from above me; and I seek refuge in You lest I be swallowed up by the earth.”

[Narrated by Ahmad and others]



(6) Frequent Supplication

On the authority of ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه):

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «مَنْ فَتِحَ لَهُ مِنْكُمْ بَابُ الدُّعَاءِ فَتُحِتَ لَهُ أَبْوَابُ الرَّحْمَةِ، وَمَا سُئِلَ اللَّهُ شَيْئًا - يَعْنِي أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ - مِنْ أَنْ يُسْأَلَ الْعَاقِبَةَ» .

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “Whomever among you has the door of supplication opened for him, then the doors of mercy have been opened for him. And Allah is not asked for anything – meaning more beloved to Him – other than being asked for well-being.”

وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «إِنَّ الدُّعَاءَ يَنْفَعُ بِمَا نَزَلَ وَمِمَّا لَمْ يَنْزَلْ، فَعَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ بِالدُّعَاءِ» .

And the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “Supplication benefits against that which befalls and that which has not befallen. So hold fast to supplication, O slaves of Allah.”

[Narrated by Tirmidhī and others]



(7) Staying Away from Places that have been Hit by an Epidemic

On the authority of ‘Abdullah bin ‘Āmir (رضي الله عنه):

أَنَّ عُمَرَ خَرَجَ إِلَى الشَّامِ، فَلَمَّا كَانَ بِسَرْغَ بَلَغَهُ أَنَّ الْوَبَاءَ قَدْ وَقَعَ بِالشَّامِ، فَأَخْبَرَهُ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ عَوْفٍ
أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: «إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَا تَقْدَمُوا عَلَيْهِ، وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا فِرَارًا
مِنْهُ» .

‘Umar went to Shām and when he reached a place called Sargh, he received news that an epidemic had broken out in Shām. So ‘Abdul-Raḥmān bin ‘Awf told him that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “If you hear that it (the plague) has broken out in a land, do not approach it; but if it breaks out in a land where you are present, do not leave trying to escape from it.”

[Narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim]

And on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه):

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: «لَا يُورَدُ الْمُمْرِضُ عَلَى الْمُصِحِّ» .

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “Do not place a sick one with a healthy one.”

[Narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim]



Abū Huraira
CENTER

(8) Doing Good and Offering Help to Others

On the authority of Anas (رضي الله عنه):

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: «صَنَائِعُ الْمَعْرُوفِ تَقِي مَصَارِعَ الشُّوءِ وَالْأَفَاتِ وَالْهَلَكَاتِ، وَأَهْلُ الْمَعْرُوفِ فِي الدُّنْيَا هُمْ أَهْلُ الْمَعْرُوفِ فِي الْآخِرَةِ» .

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “Doing good (to others) prevents misfortunate endings, epidemics and disasters. And the people of good in this world are the people of good in the Hereafter.”

[Narrated by Ḥākim]

Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمته الله) says:

“Among the greatest of cures for illness is: doing good, offering help to others, *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), *du‘ā* (supplication), humbleness, invoking Allah and repentance. These things have a greater effect on repelling diseases and bringing relief than natural medicines, but it all depends on the readiness of the soul and its acceptance of it, and its belief in it and its benefit.”

[Zād al-Ma‘ād]



(9) The Night Prayer

On the authority of Bilāl (رضي الله عنه):

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: «عَلَيْكُمْ بِقِيَامِ اللَّيْلِ، فَإِنَّهُ دَأْبُ الصَّالِحِينَ قَبْلَكُمْ، وَإِنَّ قِيَامَ اللَّيْلِ قُرْبَةٌ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْهَاةٌ عَنِ الْإِثْمِ وَتَكْفِيرٌ لِلْسَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَطْرَدَةٌ لِلدَّاءِ عَنِ الْجَسَدِ» .

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “Hold fast to *Qiyām al-Layl* (the Night Prayer), for it is the practice of the righteous before you. Indeed, *Qiyām al-Layl* is a means of nearness to Allah, a means of prevention from sin, an expiation for bad deeds and a barrier for the body against disease.”

[Narrated by Tirmidhī and others]



(10) Covering Food and Drink Containers

On the authority of Jābir bin ‘Abdullah (رضي الله عنه):

سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: « غَطُّوا الْإِنَاءَ وَأَوْكُوا السِّقَاءَ، فَإِنَّ فِي السَّنَةِ لَيْلَةً يَنْزِلُ فِيهَا وَبَاءٌ، لَا يَمُرُّ بِإِنَاءٍ لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ غِطَاءٌ، أَوْ سِقَاءٍ لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ وَكَاءٌ، إِلَّا نَزَلَ فِيهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْوَبَاءِ » .

I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, “Cover the vessels and tie the waterskin, for there is a night in the year when an epidemic disease descends, not passing an uncovered vessel or an untied waterskin except that some of that disease lands into it.”

[Narrated by Muslim]

Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمته الله) says:

“This is something that medical sciences and disciplines cannot unravel.”

[Zād al-Ma‘ād]



Conclusion

In conclusion, every Muslim should leave his affairs to Allah (ﷻ), hoping for His bounty, yearning for His grace and putting his trust in Him, for all affairs are in His Hand and under His control and subjugation.

He should also strive to deal with whatever befalls him of calamities with patience and expecting Allah's reward, for Allah (ﷻ) promises those who are patient and expect His reward that they will receive abundant reward. He (ﷻ) says:

﴿ إِنَّمَا يُوقَى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴾

“Only those who endure patiently will be given their reward without limit.”

[Sūrah al-Zumar (39):10]



And on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), who asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about the plague, to which he replied:

« أَنَّهُ كَانَ عَذَابًا يُبْعَثُهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ، فَجَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ رَحْمَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ، فَلَيْسَ مِنْ عَبْدٍ يَقَعُ الطَّاعُونَ

فَيَمُوتُ فِي بَلَدِهِ صَابِرًا، يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُصِيبَهُ إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ، إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ الشَّهِيدِ. »

“It is a punishment which Allah sends upon whomsoever He wills, but Allah has made it as a mercy for the believers. Anyone who remains in a town which has been hit by the plague and remains patient knowing that nothing will befall him other than what Allah has decreed for him, he will receive the reward of a martyr.”

[Narrated by Bukhārī]

I ask Allah to guide us all to that which He loves and is pleased with of good deeds and beautiful words, for He speaks the truth and guides to the right way.

All praise is due to Allah alone; and may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon our Prophet Muḥammad, his family and companions.

