

Religious Rituals in the Time of Corona

“Happiness will not come by fulfilling desires, but by sacrificing for a noble goal.”

If we put this saying before our eyes at the present time, it will help us greatly in overcoming the stage of Corona. There is no more important goal than contributing to getting rid of this pandemic, or contributing not to spread it. This is what drives the majority of society members to adhere to staying home even if their desire is the opposite.

The glorious Easter holiday and the holy month of Ramadan come this year in exceptional circumstances with the spread of the Corona pandemic and the imposition of self-isolation in all countries of the world in response to the recommendations of the World Health Organization. So, the mass religious celebrations were canceled in addition to mosques and churches being closed.

On Easter, people used to collectively participate in masses in churches, exchange visits, have feasts and group visits, or even travel on vacation with family and friends. Though, all this is no longer possible due to quarantine measures and travel bans to prevent Coronavirus spread. This led people and the church to resort to creative solutions to overcome this reality by broadcasting prayers on social media, distributing the light of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and lighting the houses through preventive arrangements for its direct arrival to homes. Also, the holiday chocolate and sweets for children were distributed to homes as well. People exchanged congratulations for Easter through the phone and social media. In addition, people engaged in the making of holiday sweets, coloring eggs, and celebrating the holiday in the same family circle which left this holiday a different memory in people's minds away from the usual rituals.



While Ramadan comes this year exceptionally, where the houses are free of “gatherings”, and our Suhoor meals aren’t crowded, The Ministry of Awqaf made decisions to suspend all group activities during the month of Ramadan such as crowded stores or crowds or people praying Tarawih which is one of the most prominent spiritual practice of the holy month.

Coronavirus could not change the religious principles, but it increased friendliness and human solidarity between people. This month remained filled with joy, devotion, social and human life, but the pandemic has changed some of the habits, such as setting up Tarawih and Eid prayers at home, individual worship with the nuclear family inside the house, and that futoor meals are limited to the people of the household itself. While the relationship amongst the larger family members is connected through social media, and zakat is paid to the poor rather than holding the large gracious family feasts.

Although the month will lose its most prominent group rituals, and the month will be confined to individual worship with the small family inside the home instead of the gatherings of worship, it is a good experience for the individual to live the month of Ramadan away from some of the ritual ways that often emerge from the true intentions and goals. Sometimes they even lead to the reversing the wisdom that it’s set out for, so it will be a special and useful experience with what we will miss from other beautiful customs that are unique for this month. With all wishes and intensification of prayers that the pandemic ends as soon as possible, we wish you happy holidays and Ramadan Kareem.



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