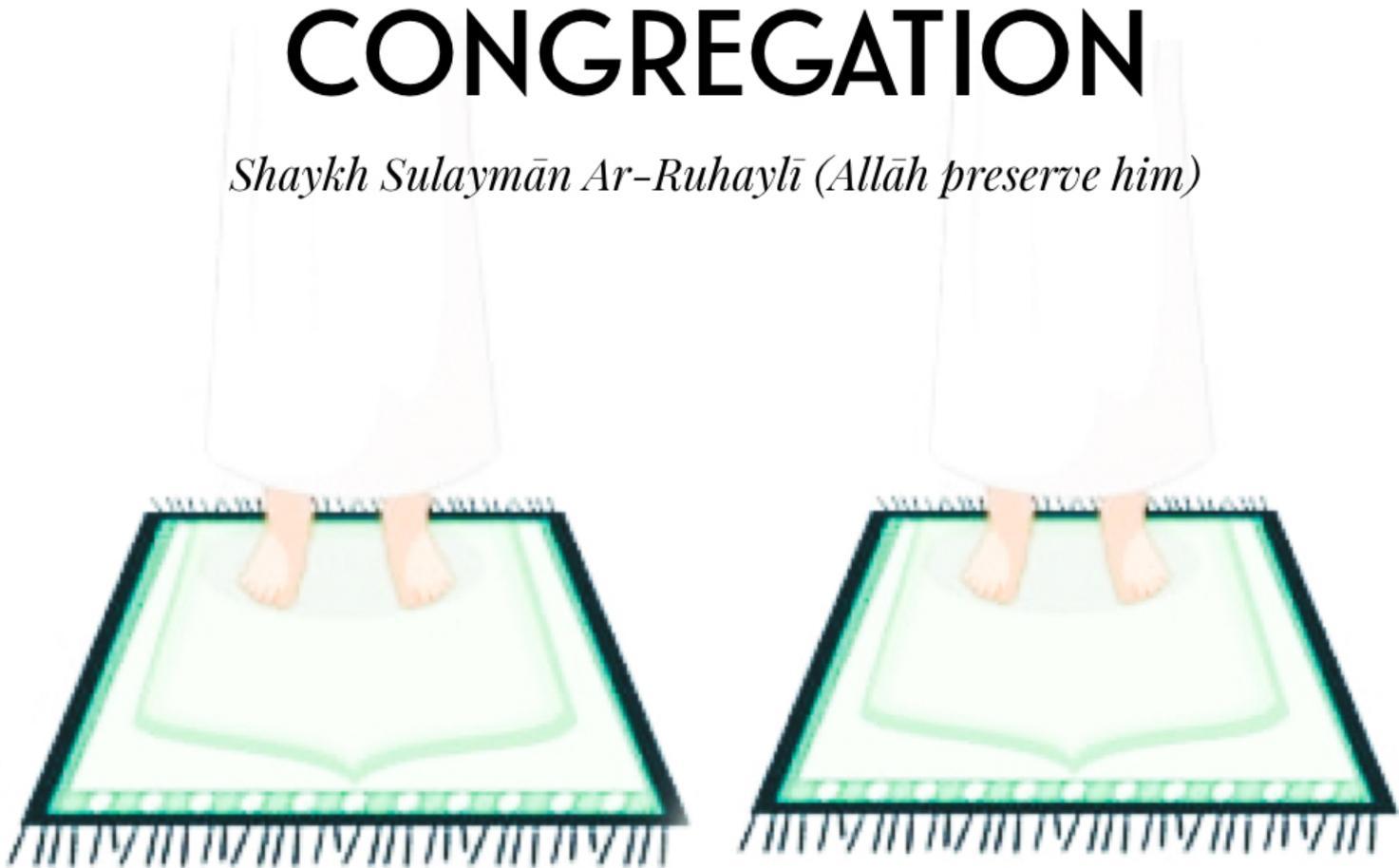


~CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC~

# LEAVING A SPACE BETWEEN PEOPLE PRAYING IN CONGREGATION

*Shaykh Sulaymān Ar-Ruhaylī (Allāh preserve him)*



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# Coronavirus Pandemic: Leaving a Space between People Praying in Congregation

*Shaykh Sulaymān Ar-Ruhaylī (Allāh preserve him)*

## Question

Is it permissible for those praying the congregational prayer to leave a gap of a metre or two on their right and their left in order to safeguard themselves from this virus?

## Answer

Dear brothers, [firstly], we must understand that standing apart in a row when praying in congregation does not have any connection with the issue of “praying alone behind a row” because they are all

standing in the same row. So without a shadow of a doubt the issue at hand does not have any connection whatsoever with the issue of “**praying alone behind a row**”.

Furthermore, the original ruling is that it is obligatory for those praying behind the Imām to do so while standing very close together and without leaving any gaps. The majority of the scholars hold it to be *Mustahabb* (recommended) and they say that leaving gaps between people praying is something *Makrūh* (disliked). However, the correct view is that it is obligatory [and not just recommended], and when a need arises for those praying in congregation to stand apart in a row, then it is allowed for them to do so.

**So now we are between two matters:** Either we say do not pray in congregation or we say – based upon a knowledge-based foundation – pray in congregation

while standing a certain distance apart from each other. So in this case we choose the latter which is to pray in congregation while standing a certain distance apart, and there is nothing wrong with this. Nevertheless, in this issue, one must adhere to the guidelines set by the ruler. Matters of this nature that affect the general public are to be entrusted to the ruler. [The Permanent Committee of Scholars in Saudi Arabia have issued a Fatwa' stating that under these circumstances, it is permissible to pray in congregation while leaving a certain distance between each person in the row].

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***Translator: Yasar A. Rahmān***

***6 Shawwāl 1441 / 29 May 2020***

# PRAYING IN DISCONNECTED ROWS

حفظه الله Shaykh Sulaymān Ar-Ruhaylī

Muslims from countries where they are allowed to pray in the mosques are asking concerning the legal ruling of praying while keeping a certain distance between each person.

The answer:

The original ruling is that there should not be any gaps between the people in any of the rows and they must all stand very closely together. The majority of the jurists are of the opinion that it is disliked to pray in a disconnected row unless there is a need or a necessity to do so. And this pandemic strongly necessitates that we do so. So it is permissible to pray while keeping a certain distance between each person with the condition that each row consists of more than one person.

Translator: Yasar A. Rahman حفظه الله

9:12pm - 26/04/2020 • <https://twitter.com/solyman24/status/1254473430956683270?s=21>

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# IS IT FROM THE WAY OF THE SALAF TO PRAY IN DISCONNECTED ROWS?

*Shaykh Sulaymān Ar-Ruhaylī حفظه الله*

Shaykh Sulaymān Ar-Ruhaylī recently tweeted concerning the permissibility of praying in disconnected rows in mosques due to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The Shaykh was asked if this was the practice of the Salaf (pious predecessors).

The Shaykh (Allāh preserve him) responded:

Did this happen in the time of the Salaf? No, it did not. As for those who were afflicted by the plague of 'Amwās, then nothing has ever been reported from them concerning this issue. In addition, this situation (Coronavirus) is completely different from that of the plague of 'Amwās. Furthermore, it is permissible to change the way the prayer is normally performed in order to uphold the congregational prayer as is the case in the prayer of fear. So, if it is permissible to change the actual way of praying, then what about something which is lesser than that, [i.e. leaving a certain distance between each person praying].

Yasar A. Rahman

11 Ramaḍān 1441 /04 May 2020

**N.B. I myself asked the Shaykh this question on WhatsApp on the 10th of Ramaḍān 1441 corresponding to the 3rd of May 2020.**

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# THE PRAYER IN LIGHT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

SHAYKH SULAYMĀN AR-RUHAYLĪ حفظه الله SAID:

**Standing closely together in a row when praying without leaving any gaps.**

The congregational prayer is of great importance and status. And this is why in order to preserve the congregational prayer, the Prayer of Fear is prayed in congregation even though this leads to changing the actual way a prayer is normally performed. Likewise to uphold the congregational prayer, when one joins the congregational prayer late, he prays behind the Imām in spite of there being a change in the form of his own prayer. Therefore it is only more appropriate that it be permissible to change the way a row is formed in prayer for the purpose of preserving the congregational prayer. So keeping a distance when praying in congregation is legislated and it is not an innovation.

TRANSLATOR: YASAR A. RAHMAN حفظه الله

12:07am - 28/05/2020 • <https://twitter.com/solyman24/status/1265751492058898432?s=21>



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