335623 - How can someone who is wearing PPE (personal protective equipment) to guard against viruses do wudoo’ and pray?

the question

Can men and women pray when wearing PPE (personal protective equipment) that covers the entire body? How can a person do wudoo’ properly when wearing PPE, if he breaks his wudoo’ and cannot open the suit, especially doctors who are busy working?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

There is nothing wrong with praying whilst wearing PPE that protects against viruses, even if it covers the face and all of the body, so long as the worshipper is able to place his nose and forehead on the ground when prostrating, because of the report narrated by al-Bukhaari (812) and Muslim (490) from Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “I have been commanded to prostrate on seven bones: the forehead – and he pointed to his nose – the hands, the knees and the ends of the feet (i.e., toes).”

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: It is not essential that these parts should touch the ground directly. Al-Qaadi said: If he prostrates on the edge of his turban, or his sleeve, or the hem of his garment, the prayer is valid, according to unanimous agreement. This is the view of Maalik and Abu Haneefah. Among those who granted a concession allowing prostration on a garment when it is very hot or very cold are: ‘Ataa’, Taawoos, an-Nakha‘i, ash-Sha‘bi, al-Awzaa‘i, Maalik, Ishaaq and ashaab ar-ra’y.

A concession allowing one to prostrate on the edge of one’s turban was granted by al-Hasan, Makhool and ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan ibn Yazeed. Shurayh prostrated on his burnoose. End quote from al-

Mughni (1/305).

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about someone who wears very large glasses or goggles and cannot prostrate fully on the seven parts, because they may prevent his nose from touching the ground.

He replied: If the glasses or goggles prevent the tip of the nose from touching the ground, then the prostration is not valid. That is because the glasses or goggles are not on the edge of the nose; rather they are in line with the eyes, so on this basis the prostration is not valid. The one who is wearing glasses or goggles that prevent his nose from touching the place of prostration must take them off whilst prostrating.

End quote from Majmoo‘ Fataawa ash-Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (13/186).

It is makrooh to cover the mouth whilst praying, but that ruling may be waived in the case of necessity.

It says in ash-Sharh al-Mumti‘ (2/193): It is makrooh to wear a mask that covers the mouth and nose, such as using the turban or head cover to cover the mouth, or the nose, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade covering the mouth when praying. [Narrated by Abu Dawood (643) and Ibn Maajah (966) with a hasan isnaad.] And because that may lead to stifling the voice and making the letters unclear when reciting Qur’an and dhikr. An exception to that is made in the case of yawning and covering the mouth in order to suppress the yawn; there is nothing wrong with that. As for doing that with no reason, that is makrooh. If there is an unpleasant smell bothering a person whilst he is praying, and he needs to cover his face, that is permissible, because it is done for a need. The same applies if he has a cold and will have an allergic reaction if he does not cover his face; this is also a need which makes it permissible for him to cover his face. End quote.

For more information, please see the answer to question no. 69855.

Secondly:

There is nothing wrong with a person doing wudoo' whilst wearing PPE, if he is able to wash the parts that must be washed when doing wudoo', and to wipe the head, even if that is by putting his wet hand under the PPE. It is permissible to wipe over the khuffayn and socks for one day and one night if one is not travelling, and for three days and nights if one is travelling.

Al-Bukhaari (363) and Muslim (274) narrated that Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah said: I was with the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and he said: "O Mugheerah, take the vessel." I took it, and the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) set out until he disappeared from my sight, and relieved himself. He was wearing a Syrian jubbah, and he tried to bring his arms out through the sleeves, but they were too narrow, so he brought his arms out from underneath and I poured water for him. He did wudoo' as for prayer, then he wiped over his khuffayn, then he prayed.

In a report narrated by Muslim, it says: He was wearing a Syrian jubbah with narrow sleeves.

If someone is able to do wudoo' whilst wearing PPE, there is nothing wrong with that.

If he is not able to do that, then he must take it off in order to do wudoo' properly.

If it is too difficult, especially for doctors who have no choice but to wear it most of the time, it is permissible for them to put prayers together – Zuhr and 'Asr, and Maghrib and 'Isha' – at the time of the earlier or later prayer, because one of the reasons for putting the prayers together is to alleviate hardship and difficulty, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) granted a concession to the woman suffering non-menstrual bleeding (istihaadah) to put prayers together, because of the difficulty in purifying herself for every prayer.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The reason for shortening prayers is travelling only; it is not permissible to shorten one's prayers when not travelling. With regard to putting the prayers together, the reason for that is necessity and valid excuses. So if a person needs to do so, he may put prayers together when travelling, whether the journey is short or long.

The same applies to putting the prayers together in the event of rain and the like, or when one is sick and the like, and also for other reasons, because the aim is to relieve the ummah of hardship.

End quote from Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa (22/293).

And Allah knows best.