

89774 - He has a medical problem in his nose – should he stop praying in congregation?

the question

I suffer from a problem in my nose, and an unpleasant smell comes from it. I have been to doctors who said that there is no cure for this problem. Should I keep on looking for a cure from the doctors, or should I give up and wait for an answer from Allaah? Should I stop praying with the congregation and attending lessons because I am bothering those who are around me?.

Detailed answer

Firstly:

First of all we ask Allaah to bless you with healing by His grace and bounty. We advise you to seek reward with Allaah for He will reward those who are patient without measure. His testing of His slaves is better for them in the long run, because it is an expiation for their sins and raises them in status.

It was narrated that Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “On the Day of Resurrection, those who were hale and hearty will wish that their skin had been cut with scissors, when they see the reward of those who were put to trial.” Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (2402); classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi.

We also advise you to seek treatment, and not to accept the words of some doctors. How often have doctors despaired of healing a sick person, then Allaah has brought about his healing at the hands of another doctor? Nowadays many alternative remedies have become available, praise be to Allaah, so you could seek the help of someone who is specialized in Arabic medicine or sha’bi medicine (folk medicine). Perhaps with them you will find something through which Allaah will grant you healing. But before and after everything else, do not fail to ask Allaah for healing, for du’aa’ brings nothing but good, and if one is sincere then Allaah will soon answer.

It was narrated that Usaamah ibn Shareek (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Bedouin said: O Messenger of Allaah, should we not treat sickness? He said: “Yes, O slaves of Allaah, treat sickness, for Allaah does not create any disease but He also creates its cure or its medicine, except one disease.” They said: O Messenger of Allaah, what is it? He said: “Old age.”

Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (2038); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi.

Secondly:

With regard to the ruling on your attending congregational prayers in the mosque, if you are afraid that you will be bothering the people around you, and you cannot prevent this by any means, such as wearing strong perfume or covering your nose when praying, then in that case you have to stay away from congregational prayers. You have a valid excuse before Allaah and before people. And in sha Allah you will have the reward for praying in congregation even if you pray at home.

It was narrated from Abu Moosa (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If a person is sick or travelling, there will be recorded for him a reward for that which he used to do when he was at home and was healthy.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (2834).

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

The scholars said: If what is happening is from Allaah and human actions have nothing to do with it, if it will disturb other worshippers then he should go out (i.e., from the mosque), such as a bad smell in the mouth or nose, or one who has a foul smell coming from his armpits. If he has a smell that will bother other people, he should not come to the mosque.

If someone were to question the idea that this is from Allaah, the answer is: If Allaah is testing you with this, do not annoy other people with it and do not offend the angels, and you will be rewarded for bearing that thing with patience, so seek reward with Allaah. You are not sinning if you do not pray with the people, because you are refraining from doing so by the command of Allaah.

If he says: Won't this weaken my faith because praying with the congregation is better?

We say: you are not to be blamed for this weakening of faith, just as the menstruating woman does not pray and her faith is weakened by that, but she is not to be blamed for that, because if a person falls short because of something that is beyond his control, he is not to be blamed. End quote.

Al-Sharh al-Mumti' (5/113, 114)

And he was asked: I suffer from a bad smell in my nose and mouth, and I am embarrassed to mix with people and to offer prayers in the mosque, because I heard a hadeeth which says that the angels are bothered by that which bothers the sons of Adam. Can I pray at home? Please note that I pray at home most of the time, except for Jumu'ah, which I pray in the mosque. Please advise me, may Allaah reward you with good.

He replied:

We ask Allaah to bless you with healing. There is no sin on you if you pray at home, for Jumu'ah and other prayers, because you are excused. Allaah knows your intention and that were it not for this problem, you would pray with the congregation, so He will record the reward for you, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said during the campaign to Tabook: "There are people in Madeenah whom we left behind, but we did not cross any mountain pass or valley but they were with us. They were kept back by excuses." Narrated by al-Bukhaari (2839). We ask Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, to heal you.

But I hope that you will see whether putting on strong perfume will cover the smell that is coming from you. If that is so, then strive to do that. But if that is of no benefit, then you are excused. If you can put on strong perfume that will cover the unpleasant smell, then you can offer the five daily prayers and Jumu'ah prayer in the mosque. End quote.

Majmoo' al-Fataawa (15/question no. 1070).

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked:

My father is elderly and does not go to Jumu'ah prayer. He said that he is sick, which is his way of referring to the bad smell in his mouth (halitosis). He says that he does not want to bother the people with this smell. Is it permissible for him to do that?

He replied:

Yes, that is a valid excuse. If he has a strong unpleasant odour and it is not easy for him to get rid of it, then he is excused, just as having a smell of onions and leeks is an excuse. But if there is a remedy and a way of removing the smell, he should do that so that he will not stay away from Jumu'ah prayer and prayer in congregation. But if he is unable to do that then he is excused more than the one who eats onions. Undoubtedly halitosis is more annoying to those who are around him, if the smell is obvious. End quote.

Noor 'ala al-Darb (tape no. 219; minute 11).

And Allaah knows best.