



Interview for Study on Impacts of COVID-19 on U.S. Muslims

Arab and Muslim Women's Research and Resource Institute (AMWRI)

Interviewer/Number of Interview: SW1

Date: May 1, 2020

Name of Interviewee Assigned by Researcher (to protect identity): Respondent

Year of Birth: [Early 1960's]

Gender: Male

Country of Origin: Palestine

Year of Immigration: [mid 1980's]

Current State in which respondent resides: [A state in the Midwest]

Note: In the transcript, “I” refers to Interviewer, and “R” refers to Respondent/Interviewee. To protect the identity of the interviewee, some responses to questions are not provided. In such cases, this statement will show in the transcript: Information is not being made available. In other responses, specific details that might identify the family members are omitted or made more general.

Abstract:

The respondent shared the adaptations the local Muslim Community Center had made to adjust to the COVID crisis and the effects this had on congregants. The respondent shared that the Community Center had various outreach projects to address food scarcity and the mental health concerns of congregants, by having specialists come to speak to the community. They also shared the adjustments the school made and the changes to the communal prayer days, particularly the difficulty for the holy days of Ramadan.

Key Themes:

COVID, Prayer, Mental Health, Community outreach, COVID adjustments and adaptations for religious observation, educational programs, and virtual platforms. Also, Islamic teachings and scripture relevant to the COVID pandemic and individuals' responsibilities, including their responsibility to get a COVID vaccine.

Transcript:

I: I will turn on some captions. Great, so I really appreciate your taking time to spend with us. This project is investigating the role of COVID in the Muslim experience here in the U.S. The questions are about your own experience and that of your community. And so, I wanted to first ask how long you've been in the United States, and some background that you would like to share.

R: I have been in the states for the past thirty-five years. I established my family here. I have five kids. Four of them are college graduates. I am working full time now with the Islamic Society [in the city where I live] as an Imam and religious leader. I am a PhD candidate and have a master's degree.

I: Thank you. And the year that you moved here?

R: I arrived in the states in [mid 1980's].

I: Excellent and where did you move from?

R: Palestine.

I: Perfect, and if you don't mind sharing your year of birth?

R: [Early 1960's].

I: If we could move to the questions. The first question is, could you please identify some of the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Muslim community in your city? For example, how did the mosque closures disrupt the daily and weekly prayer services, and educational programs that were normally offered at your institution?

R: Yes, you know, the pandemic had a heavy toll on the programs and the activities and the services that our center provides for the community. And as Muslims, we know the prayer is

a very central thing in our faith, especially attending the five daily prayers and in the mosque or in the Islamic Center and mainly the Friday prayer which is obligatory on every Muslim. So the closure interrupted this practice and the prayers for Muslims; this is not something easy that a Muslim will accept. And one of the main challenges we have also in the month of Ramadan, because it's, you know, the most spiritual season for the Muslim during the year. And there is a special prayer in the month of Ramadan that must be offered also in the Masjid in the mosque, and it's called Tarawih; this also was interrupted. So basically as I said, it was not easy for so many Muslims to accept the fact that the mosque must be closed or the Islamic Center must be closed and why? Because in Islam we have the belief that everything is from God, whether it was the benefit or any harm, or if God wills something nobody can stop it. So they said we need to rely on Allah, on God, and go to the mosque and everything. But of course the administration, in consultation with the physicians in the Muslim community, decided to close down the facility and when it comes to our programs and activities, we start doing it virtually. Although I said this was not very easy for us in the very beginning, but at a later stage it became normal; now all our programs, the lectures, their seminars, the workshops, all of them are done virtually, but when things became a little bit better, we reopened the Islamic Center. But there are requirements of observing safety measures when it comes to wearing masks and providing sanitization and providing paper sheets for the people to pray on; and we close the library. We close the book shelves for carrying the copies of the Koran. We do not wish for people to touch the books inside the mosque and also we observe social distancing and also we shortened the time of the prayers, especially on a Friday. On the Friday we used to have almost 2000 people in the building, but after the pandemic we had to control or limit the number, restrict the numbers and so we had only 100 in the prayer. But we have instead of praying one single Friday prayer we started doing four prayers and in each we have almost 100. So, imagine the number we allowed during the pandemic after we reopen the Islamic center, only 400 and before pandemic, we used to have 2000 people. So you see how much it affected our religious life and religious practices here at the Islamic Center.

I: Yes, thank you, you've outlined the steps that you have taken and the leadership to fulfill the needs of the community members by reducing the number of guests but having more

times for prayer to allow for observance of religious necessities. The next question I feel you've answered– the responses to the challenges the interruption of routine and normality and so you have the workshops, and the educational programs are now being offered through Zoom or online?

R: Yes, it's through Zoom online. Basically, we are using mostly the technology that we are streaming, so it depends on the program that the host will choose or whoever is doing the program.

I: Right. Do you feel the pandemic has impacted student learning? Are fewer students engaged in Sunday school classes? Or was there a smooth transition to virtual?

R: Okay, first of all, we don't have only just Sunday school or weekend schools. We have a full-time school here in our organization or under our organization. It's from K4 to 12 grade. Basically, we have a very successful school, and all classes were turned into virtual learning.

I: And so are there fewer students now engaged in school classes for any reason?

R: No, no, all of them must attend the virtual classes, and there was a discussion among the staff in Salaam School. If we can go back or offer the choice for the families, but the administration, I believe, decided to keep it virtually until the end of the year. So now all classes are done virtually, and students attend their classes from home and we have parents teachers, conferences, quarterly, and so basically everything is going on as planned. But of course, we believe that the virtual learning is not exactly, or it will not have, the same impact and the same interaction that is expected in the classroom and it will not be the same and the performance will not be the same. The achievements of the students will not be the same, but at least we continued providing our kids with the education they need during this pandemic.

I: Thank you. And during the pandemic, how did your institution fare in terms of financial goals such as donations, or funding for special projects, maintaining staff levels, and helping members in need?

R: Absolutely, you know we had for example, on Fridays, you are talking about almost fifty-two Fridays in the year we used to collect almost \$2000 average or more from the people who come, the worshippers who come to the prayer. But you know we of course we lost that, you know, money during the Friday prayers and sometimes we when people used to come to the building and for the daily prayers they used sometimes to donate some money—of course that also is gone, but we had a virtual fundraiser and it was a very successful fundraiser. So we maybe suffered a little bit, but we thank God, we continue doing our business as usual.

I: Well, I'm so happy to hear this, yes. This question says since mosques and Islamic Centers are usually preferred sites for many types of communal gatherings during the pandemic, did you and/or the leadership feel pressure from community members to open against the advice of medical experts?

R: Absolutely, yes, we had so many pressures, and even among the leadership in the administration talking about here, the Board of Directors and the staff people like me and my colleagues. There were a lot of pressures, we have calls, we have people coming and you know, on social media, calling on the administration to open, but as I said, we educated our community for the importance of observing the safety measures and the advice of the physicians and the medical staff in our community and the CDC and all. Basically, it was a matter of education, and people at the end came to accept the fact that we have to close down for a certain time, and when things, as I said, were relaxed and the cases of COVID-19 started getting down or downsizing, basically we took the decision to open, but always we told the worshippers who came to the building that if you do not cooperate with the regulations and the safety measures and if we find that there are cases of COVID-19 among those who come to the center, we are forced to close again. We had, of course, at the door on Fridays, a team who will check the temperatures. And we required, when we reopen for especially for Friday services, we required registration for the people who come and attend the Friday service; this was for if we have any cases, we just send a bulk mail to the people who attended or came in contact with that individual and warned them that so-and-so was infected, or tested positive so you have come close to him and interacted with him, you

have to take the measures and make sure that you are safe. So we required the registration only for Friday, but for the day five daily prayers, we closed the center completely except for 10, 15 minutes for the service. So we opened the door automatically 10 minutes before the prayer, and, and when the prayer starts, we used to lock the doors so the people who do not come on time will lose the chance of joining the Congregational prayer. We were very strict on this, and of course we had a lot of pressures. But we did not, as I said, bow down to the pressures as I said, because the leadership sometimes had to take the tough decisions and tough measures to ensure or secure the safety of the Members.

I: I see. Thank you. I have a question about the coordination and collaboration. So how did levels of coordination and collaboration change between different Muslim institutions in your city or nationally? Were they beneficial to communities, and if so, in what specific ways?

R: As I said, before the pandemics, we used to have sometimes common programs, activities and projects together; we had meetings with the leadership from different Islamic organizations [locally and nationally]. But as I said, after this pandemic, we did not have the meetings; we did not have the means to have the gatherings for the leadership and so on. So it affected us in all aspects as leadership as different Islamic organizations, so all the common programs and activities and meetings came to a stop basically, or if they were stopped and if we had any meetings we had to do it virtually. Whenever we used to have a major Islamic program that coincides with some big Islamic occasions, we used to have the whole community coming together where thousands of people might attend. But of course we could not do it during the pandemic, and we relied on our virtual meetings, our virtual programs. And of course, the people have the choice to watch that or not online. So basically, it affected so many of our relationships between the different Islamic organizations. I believe locally and nationally.

I: Thank you for sharing. I have a question about the kind of topics on lectures. In what ways did the delivery and topics of religious lectures or sermons change during the pandemic? Were issues of social and personal struggle and stress addressed regularly by the

Imams during the pandemic?

R: Okay, most of our programs during the pandemic, of course I said focused on the religious programming and when I say the religious programming, you know, because Islam is a comprehensive religion– is a comprehensive message. It's not only a spiritual faith so in the religious programs we also addressed family issues such as family relationships or family problems. We addressed marriage, we addressed youth, upbringing of children. We addressed also stress in their families. Sometimes we addressed mental health issues, and as religious leaders, sometimes we used to invite experts or a specialist in the field. For me, I cannot teach about, for example, mental health. But whenever we plan a program as religious leaders or the other committees in the center, we will invite the speakers and the experts on the subject and have the programs with them. We had programs about financial issues during the pandemic. In one of the greatest programs or projects we had, we collected almost \$100,000 to support the needy people or families. Because so many workers and people who used to work and earn some money for their families could not work anymore, we collected almost \$100,000 and we bought different kinds of bulk food. We put them in boxes and we invited the needy families to come forward and pick up whatever they need. And based on the size of the family we used to give them one box or two boxes each to help them. And we've done this twice. We also had gift cards for some food stores. Whenever people used to come forward, we used to give them such gift cards to buy food for their families. I lost the focal point of the question was about I'm sorry.

I: Oh, it was about the topics of lectures and how they might have changed.

R: So yes, so we had health issues especially in the very first few months of the pandemic. We have to focus more on the health issues and what Islam says about health and the maintenance of safety and security, because one of the main goals of Islamic Sharia is to protect the human life. This is one of the main goals of Islam. Okay, Islam has five major goals. One of them is to protect the life of the humans. So basically, we focused in the very first few months of the pandemic on educating the families and the Muslims in general about

the importance of observing hygiene, and you know, precautions and safety measures and observing the health guidelines that are issued by the CDC or the physicians in our community. And you know telling our people that this is part of your faith, and, for example, we used to give them the example that if you get infected and you know it, and you go and mix with the people, that means you are committing a sin. And if somebody dies because of you, this is like a major sin in Islam, because you caused the sickness or the disease for that person that might lead to his death. So, you will be in big trouble with God, per se, and so we used to teach them and educate them about the importance of health issues. And this was a big chance for us as Muslims, as I said, also to bring about those health issues to the attention of our community at large.

I: Thank you. I have a question about the voices of resistance to the virtual transition.

R: Yes.

I: Were there strong voices of resistance in the community against virtual gatherings? If so, what sorts of reasoning or arguments were offered to support the modified formats of delivering religious and educational programs by Imams?

R: Okay, yeah. For example, I said the vast majority of the Muslim scholars I'm not talking about the religious leadership here in our center, but I'm talking about the main religious scholars of the whole Muslims around the world. They do not agree to do certain worships virtually. But we found for example, some of the arguments from the people who say that Islam fits every time, every place, and Islam is good for all conditions, and Islam is a practical religion, so they have had the argument that yes, we can do our worship, virtually, meaning that the Imam or the religious leader can go to the center and stand by himself in the mosque and we have, through video conference or video tape or Zoom or Facebook deliver, for example, a speech and stand up for prayer and the people who are observing or watching him at home can they follow him. Because in Islam the Imam usually leads the congregation in bowing, prostrating, standing, you know, supplicating and so on. And the people in the mosque see him. They are standing in lines behind him, so the people who

argued or they were voices of resistance in the community, they said, we can do this virtually while we are at our homes, especially in Ramadan, as I said. And also on Fridays they said the Imam can go to the Islamic center and deliver the speech. What we call the sermon or Khutbah and then the people will be sitting at home. Watching him from their phones from their TV screens and then when the time for a prayer and he starts the prayer, the people will follow him. So this was their argument. But as I said, we subscribed to the opinion of the Muslim scholars, the vast majority of Muslim scholars, that this is not allowed and of course we did not budge on this issue. Although as I said some people might— I am not sure exactly— but some people might have done it in our community following Imams from out of our town, from out of state. Maybe some individuals did that, but as I said, as a religious leadership, it was our decisive decision not to do it. When we reopened, this argument, of course disappeared. And so many people, it's their choice to come so many people, by the way, even when I said in the very beginning that we had 400 coming on Friday, when we used before the pandemic have 2000. So many people, especially old people or people who have, you know, health issues, they themselves chose not to come until things as I said, improve, until people get the vaccine and cases you know go down almost to zero. So many people, still until now for the past year and more, did not come to the Islamic Center to worship here in the building.

I: Great, thank you. The following question already you may have spoken about, but there's an opportunity to speak a little bit more about the Friday prayers.

R: Yeah.

I: So, the question is, did you personally offer or participate in Friday prayers online during the pandemic? If so, what was your reasoning? If not, what was your reasoning?

R: As I said, no, we did not offer a Friday prayer, virtually because we don't believe this is the right thing to do. And that's the reason why we did not do it. Because Islamically, it is not allowed to do this. Friday prayer, you know, based on what Allah said in the Quran and what the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said, it's about the gathering people

getting together, people you know I said coming in one place and observing the prayer so, you know, to get together– this is the main purpose of the Friday prayer. To do it virtually, it will not achieve this goal, and that's the reason why we did not accept the offer to do it virtually. But as I said, we used Fridays to give a lecture, and also we gave the option, which is Islamically accepted– we gave the option to the people at home to their families– if you are three individuals in the family– one of you can stand up, deliver a speech for one minute or two minutes, or three, or five based on how much knowledge he can offer, and then you do your own Friday at home. This is what we call it – “Mini Fridays” at home, so we encouraged the families to do their Fridays at home and some of the families they use sometimes to call on the neighbor if he's qualified to recite the Quran, and you know, say a few words that make sense religiously and they used to do that thing. But I said we discouraged them from having big groups. And some families sometimes used to get together if they know each other and they observe health measures or safety measures. This argument now is over, and we don't have it anymore. I said people stop arguing against this thing, but I said the people start doing their own Fridays at home because this is allowed if we have three individuals, you know even a man and two women, even, okay, or for example, a man and his sons and his wife and daughter, okay, they can do their own Jumma. What we call Jumma, meaning the Friday. Okay, and the people start doing that. So it was as I said, something that we did not do here because we do not believe it's the right thing to do it virtually for the whole community. But we encourage the people to do it physically, in their homes.

I: Very interesting, this innovative approach. Thank you. We just have about five more questions.

R: Okay.

I: This one is about the long term impact of the pandemic. So, it asks how would you assess the long-term impact of the pandemic, in how your mosque and Islamic center will function in the coming years? Are there services and programs that will continue to be offered online after the pandemic, or do you think there will be a return to normal?

R: Yes. okay, we hope and pray to God to you know, basically lift such hardship, and relieve us from this pandemic as soon as possible. And this is our hope in God that this pandemic will come to an end. And now people are getting vaccinated. Thanks God and you know, they feel themselves everybody who gets the vaccine feels more safe and I trust that things will go back to normal. I don't think this it will have a long term impact that means a life will continue doing, basically people continue doing what they are doing now, but it taught the people the lesson, how to be careful and how to observe hygiene, how to follow health guidelines. This is something good that benefits the people, but we had in history so many pandemics that took place in different parts of the world, even in the in the Muslim society. In the past, we had the plague and basically it killed hundreds of thousands, you know, of Muslims, but they went through. And you know it happened in Spain, it happened in Europe, in many parts of the world. So basically it's not the first time that humanity has such a pandemic. And we will go through and we will leave it behind our backs at a certain point. So we encourage our community members to get the vaccine. There are some community members who were, you know, resisting getting the vaccine, because there are a lot of conspiracy theories going on. They said, okay, they will insert a chip in your body and you know this is like from Bill Gates and some other things. You know the government wants to watch you by putting a GPS inside your body, all of this stuff. Or sometimes some Muslims say that the vaccines might have some ingredients that are haram, or unlawful in Islam– something is prohibited in the ingredients of such vaccines. But we assured our community and the Muslims that this is a necessity, and Islam requires us as the Prophet said– for every disease there is a cure. If God, for example, puts on earth a certain disease, God also will bring down the cure for it. So basically, we told our community members and we educated them: getting the vaccine is a necessity, and it's a measurement of safety, and as a Muslim you are required to take it. So many people who were resisting this– you know I meet them in the lobby here when they come or we call each other– and they say “Oh, I got the vaccine.” [The respondent described a situation in which a Muslim community member changed his mind about the vaccine and got it, due to the teaching and education he received from the Imam.] I believe this pandemic, as a Muslim because you know I trust God; I trust His judgment. I believe this pandemic will come to an end as the previous pandemics in human history. But people need to be careful. People need to know what they are doing and

observe hygiene and health measurements. I hope the health agencies around the world, international health agencies, will also educate the people more, and take care of their own business. And whoever, whether it was big corporations or labs in any nation, if they are doing certain experiments that might endanger the human life, they have to take tough measures against them. Because I believe there are certain individuals, certain corporations, and certain governments that have ideas of developing chemical weapons or working on certain things for the future that it might endanger human life. And those people as I said should be stopped from endangering the human life at large in the whole world.

I: Thank you so yeah, this is a perfect because one of the questions is about your stance regarding the vaccines and how your leadership has taken significant steps to advise the Community.

R: Yes, we did issue written statements. And also we reproduced the statements of what we call Islamic Councils [Fit'r] councils. That means this is we're talking about councils of jurists, Muslim jurists or experts on the field of Islamic Studies who issued the statements from around the world. We reproduce such statements, and we issued our own statements; and we had the virtual programs where we have the religious leaders coming together and addressing such issues, as I said, and it was something that the people accepted in the end.

I: Very good, thank you, so just a few last questions. As an Imam and Community leader, what are the ways in which you encouraged your community to cope with the pandemic when they experienced anxiety, fear, grief, and isolation?

R: When I said Islam is a way of life, we believe as Muslims in our faith— pandemic or sickness or any calamity that might happen, it could be one of two things. This is in Islam, so it could be a test from God that means God is testing our faith, testing our patience, you know, or it could be the other option— it could be a punishment from God for doing sinful things. So as Muslims, whenever there is a pandemic, when there is, for example sickness even for the individual we say, oh oh God, make it a test for me, not a punishment. Because usually in our faith, tests are giving to the faithful people and a test is a good thing from God to his servant, so that's the reason why when you have a Muslim who gets sick, he always

says, thanks God, all praise be to God, may God provide me with patience. And we believe sickness is a way of cleansing the sins. So, when we go and visit somebody who is sick in the hospital, for example or at home, we use the word, Ko'hour. That means may this sickness be a purifying, you know, means to you. That means it purifies you of your sins and he will say, Amen— which means May God accept. So this is the way we look at the pandemic. And from the very beginning we gave lectures, okay, this could be a test from God, so you have to have to be patient or it could be a punishment from God, for us as Muslims we are doing something wrong against God. We are misbehaving, we are committing sins, we are hurting other people and this is also applies to the larger humanity not only to the Muslims, because we believe in Islam that as God mentioned in the Koran, that corruption and mischief has appeared on Earth because of the people you know gained or the people's hands gained or earned. That means we find most of the disasters today, I'm not talking about the natural disasters. I'm talking about wars about, for example, refugees about poverty, about, sometimes even sicknesses, and you know what you call this all these calamities and disasters that take place nowadays. In the world, it's a human myth. Wars are human myths because of their greediness and the love for control and imperialism. As Doctor Edward Said mentioned— Colonialism. Okay? That was part of the human history and we know the impact of colonialism in the whole world. Look how nowadays, how rich and powerful nations are exploiting and sucking the resources of the poor nations in Africa, and Asia, in South America, and so on. So, basically, we have a lot of the mischief and the corruption that is taking place in the whole world today. Basically, there are certain individuals, certain corporations, certain powers in the world, who are, you know, the reason behind such disasters. So when we in the very beginning, we used to educate our people to cope with the pandemic telling them you have to trust God. But if you are wrong that means you are not worshipping God, you are not doing something good, you are this. You need to correct yourself. You need to straighten yourself. You need to go to the straight path. You need to set, you know, be a true servant of God, so we tried our best as I said, for Muslims to accept this. As you know, something— a fact of life we have to deal with it, we cannot avoid it, but we have to fight against it. We have to seek a cure and you know, practice health measures, and at the end it is the decision of God, whether He gives us life, or He gives us death.

I: Yes, thank you. This has been very enlightening. It sounds like the way that you have been approaching this conversation with the community is through the religious sphere and with the question of the congregants' direct relationship with God and this has been the way.

R: Yes.

I: Good. Thank you. So, this question is about the mental wellbeing during the pandemic. What are the steps taken by your community to manage members' mental wellbeing during the pandemic, and what is continuing on today?

R: You know, as I said, we had some programs focusing on mental health and we had the expert to deal with that. You know, as I'm talking about myself as a religious leader. Honestly, I did not touch that much on the mental health issues, but we invited certain experts certain as I said, scholars to talk about this and we have one, I believe it's coming next week even, where we had some counselors, some psychiatrists and, you know some health, you know, experts to talk about these things. We had some programs, some activities you know to deal with this. It has been done by some of my colleagues. I am one of the older Imams; the younger Imams are more open about such issues because of our traditional learning and so on, and so basically, they had the programs and the seminars about the mental health issues that I was not part of it. So, basically, I'm not maybe the right person to address such issue.

I: That's fine. I think the last question is similar, it says: What suggestions did you have for members to take care of their mental wellness during the pandemic? As far as you know, did these suggestions help?

R: As I said, Islam basically as a faith, always tries to create peace in the mind and the heart of the Muslim, or the Muslims in general. So as I said, we as Muslims believe that God is the one who controls this universe, sustains this universe and we believe that everything is from God. Everything is from God. So when it comes to the pandemic, as I said and I mentioned before, it could be a test, or it could be a punishment. So as Muslims, whenever we had something like this, okay, we always tell the people— check your relationship with God, see

if you are doing your duties towards God. See if you are doing something that is harming other people. So basically, don't think of yourself, don't be selfish, and don't have this ego. You have to think of yourself as a member of this community, a member this society, a member of the humanity. And you have to be a contributor to the well being of the community, the society and humanity at large. So the best suggestion that we provide for our community to develop this mental health awareness is basically to trust God, and do the right thing and follow the Islamic practices that you know do not allow Muslims to cause any harm to anybody, and if anybody develops of course some mental problems or mental sickness and whatever, we have to seek medication. Because, as I mentioned, also before that for every disease there is a cure. That's what Islam says, and we told them to go and consult with the doctors and sometimes we have what we call even religious treatment for some of the mental health issues we have in Islam what is called Roquia Sharia, roquia, Sharia. There are certain verses from the Koran. Certain supplications that the Prophet taught to us, and we you know, sometimes after consulting with the doctors this is maybe in addition to all the doctors are doing. We offer such prayers, you know, for that sick person and we ask God to cure him and to grant him, you know the best of health, so this is the way we do it. You know I said, and as I said, I'm not an expert on the health or mental health issues, but this is what I mean, the religious learning that I had, you know, you know gives me at the moment.

I: Thank you. And as far as you know, do you think these suggestions have been helpful for those in your community?

R: Absolutely, absolutely, for sure. You know, I said so many people, I said in the very beginning they were doubtful about what we do and especially when it comes to the religious programming and so many things also, but we educated the people, and usually the good Muslim, the true Muslim, when you quote what God says in the Quran and what the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said in his sayings and told them this is what Allah said, God. This is what the Prophet said, you know, the vast majority of Muslims, you know, I said, feel peace in their hearts, in their minds and they come to accept. I said the suggestion that we give to them in how to deal with the pandemic or such mental or any other health

issues.

I: Thank you. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

R: Not really, you know. I just pray to God that to relieve all humanity from this pandemic and everything will go back to normal where people get together, party together. The good parties, I'm talking about here, okay, and enjoy the company of each other because the pandemic had a heavy toll on the social relationships between the humans. You know, if you cannot, even sometimes you know, like reach out to your grandsons or granddaughters or your brothers or your relatives, or your in-laws, and nowadays I have started congratulating each other in Islamic occasions over the phone, or virtually and whatever, you know. So it affected our social relationships, so we pray to God, you know to lift this pandemic and relieve us from this hardship and so we can go back to meet each other and greet each other. But of course, we learned a big lesson from this pandemic that we need to be careful and we need to observe what we do and make sure that we should we do the right thing and observe the health measures to protect ourselves and protect others around us.

I: Thank you so much. I say Shukran to you.

R: Thank you so much, no problem. It's my pleasure.

I: My thoughts and prayers for your community and thank you for your excellent work in [city].