



*AMJA Declaration Regarding Hoarding Essential
Items During the COVID-19 Crisis*

Prepared by Office of the Imam
Islamic Association of Raleigh
April 16th, 2020

Q. Knowing that a stay-at-home order has been imposed in most U.S. states for two weeks, with the possibility of an unknown extension, is it permissible for us to buy food, cleaning products, and essential medical supplies in bulk, that will last a month or more, for the family, while knowing that such bulk purchases are in excess of daily need and reduce the market inventory (in some stores depleting it completely), which prevents others from purchasing what they need? It should be noted that some stores limit bulk purchases, so some people visit multiple stores, purchasing the maximum limit at each store, in order to stock up on the supplies they think they will need for their family during this crisis.

A. In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Beneficent.

All praise belongs to Allah, and may prayers and peace be upon Allah's Messenger, his family, his Companions, and those that followed.

There is no problem in purchasing lawful provisions in desired quantities so long as it does not harm others.

Al-Bukhari has dedicated a chapter in his Saḥīḥ entitled, "Storing the Family's Foodstuffs for a Year and How to Provide for the Family." In this chapter he relates the hadith of 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), who said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to sell dates from the garden of Bani an-Nadīr and store foodstuffs for his family that would suffice them for a year." This was during a time of abundance when the goods in the market were plentiful. During times of hardship and crisis, it is a must for people to refrain from such purchasing habits that restrict others and are considered blameworthy monopolization, as reported in the hadith, "Monopolization is nothing but sin."

In his explanation of Saḥīḥ Muslim, Imam al-Nawawi stated, "The hadith about the Prophet storing provisions for a year permits storing provisions for a year or some other time frame, and this does not diminish one's reliance upon Allah." The scholars have unanimously agreed that it is permitted for people to store what they produce from their land, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did. If they desire to purchase items from the market and store them to meet their family's needs, it would not be permitted if there were shortages in the food supply in the market. Rather, they should purchase what will not further deplete the supply for the Muslims, such as the amount of a few days or a month. During times of abundance,

it is permitted to purchase foodstuffs for a year or more. These details have been reported from many scholars by al-Qadi. He also reported, from some, the unrestricted permissibility to do so” (12/70).


In *Fath al-Bāri*, Ibn Ḥajr stated that the scholars “have differed regarding the permissibility of storing foodstuffs purchased from the market. Iyyād stated that some have permitted it using this hadith as proof, though it [the hadith] does not serve as evidence because it [what the Prophet (pbuh) stored] was harvested from the land. As a means of showing compassion for others, some [scholars] have prohibited it unless it does not harm others. The source of differing views is present when there is no hardship, otherwise [when there are shortages/hardships, they are unanimous that] such storing is impermissible” (15/214).

Limiting monopolization to foodstuffs, even though some scholars have done so, is a point of contention. Rather it includes everything which is withheld or purchased beyond what is usual, at the expense of others. The scholars have differed regarding that which is subject to monopolization. There are those who say it applies strictly to foodstuffs and others who say it applies to everything which people need and are harmed due to it being hoarded. This is the view of the Mālikis, and in a narration of Imam Ahmad. This is the correct position in accordance with the obvious nature of the hadith.

In *Nayl al-Awṭār*, al-Shawkāni stated, “That which is obvious from the hadiths is the impermissibility of monopolizing [goods], regardless what they are, be they foodstuffs, fodder, or otherwise. The explicit mention of foodstuffs in some narrations is not suitable to restrict the other narrations of a general nature. Rather they [i.e., the hadiths which mention foodstuffs] make mention of some specific types which are included in that which is general [i.e., those hadiths which do not mention specific types of goods].”

In his annotations of *Asnā al-Maṭālib*, al-Ramli al-Shāfi'i stated, “it should include everything which is typically needed, such as food and clothing.”

This aligns with the wisdom behind prohibiting monopolies, which is to prevent others from being harmed. Accordingly the Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Iftā in Saudi Arabia has stated in their edict (#6374), “Because it causes harm to Muslims, it is not permissible to store things which people need, known as monopolizing, based on the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him)



“Monopolizing is nothing but sin,” reported by Imams Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Dawūd, al-Nasā’i, and Ibn Mājah. It is permissible to store goods which are not needed by people until such time as they [those goods] become needs, and then they may be offered in order to prevent hardship and harm” (Fatwas of the Permanent Committee, 13/184).

The standard by which such harmful purchasing and storing of goods is measured, is based on local standards. These standards are set by official channels concerned with the supply of goods and managing and regulating the flow of products in the market to customers. These regulations, which manage and regulate the flow of products and prohibit them from creating a diminished supply due to monopolization or bulk purchasing, should be adhered to. If the official channels do not institute such regulations, Muslims should consider praiseworthy local standards and limit their purchasing to the amount which is not considered blameworthy by society in such circumstances.

[And Allah the Exalted knows best.](#)

