TO: **[NAME OF INSTITUTION]**

RE: Request for Exemption from Mandatory Covid Vaccine To whom it may concern,

 My name is Abdullah Ali, and I am an expert in Islamic law. I am writing on behalf of **[NAME]**, who seeks a religious exemption from the mandatory Covid-19 vaccines. Muslims believe in God who created the heavens, earth, and all in between. He is a personal God Who intervenes in human affairs and has guided humanity through human emissaries. Part of this guidance is direction on the importance of sustaining life and bodily integrity, and of protecting faith, intellect, property, and family from harm and corruption.

The Prophet Muhammad has taught us that for every illness God has sent down a cure. He encouraged us to seek “safe” and “effective” remedies when ill, to take measures to reduce infection and contagion during plagues, while simultaneously reminding us that no remedy has an inherent capacity to cure, but rather that all might and power originate from God and trust in Him. The Prophet warned us to take refuge against plagues and their spread saying, “Flee from plague in the same way that you would flee from a lion.” His guidance emphasizes the importance of doing our part to mitigate harm to ourselves and others, then placing our reliance on God with respect to outcomes, and finally accepting whatever God decrees after all means are exhausted. “Every soul shall taste death,” the Qur’an informs us. The Qur’an also says that “God does not forestall a soul once its term has arrived.” Even as he encouraged the use of remedies to treat illness, the Prophet emphasized reliance on God to the degree of promising the greatest reward to believers who placed their trust entirely in God and avoided the use of earthly means, such medical remedies, to overcome illness. The Prophet stated that when the Angel Gabriel showed him the future destiny of his nation, Gabriel said, “…This is your nation. Along with them are seven hundred thousand who will enter Heaven with neither reckoning nor punishment.” He then said, “They are those who do not employ incantations, are not superstitious, do not cauterize their wounds, but rather place their full trust in their Lord.” According to Muslim scholars, this tradition affords a Muslim the right to refuse medical treatment, particularly when the person does so out of complete reliance on God. The Qur’an says, “Say: Nothing will afflict us other than what God has written for us. He is our Master. And let the believers place their trust in God.” While treatment is valued in Islam, medical interventions are considered merely symbolic means to improve health, while the true cause of cure is God. To believe otherwise makes one guilty of the sin of subtle idolatry due to believing one’s health and wellbeing are guaranteed by medical remedies rather than the Creator, the true healer.

The Prophet further advised us to avoid doubtful and suspicious matters, saying, “Avoid what causes you doubt for what does not cause you doubt.” According to another prophetic tradition, “The lawful is clear. The unlawful is clear. And between them are doubtful matters of which many are unaware. So, the one who avoids doubtful matters has sought innocence for his religion and dignity. However, he who falls into doubtful matters falls into the unlawful, like the shepherd who shepherds around a sanctuary on the verge of grazing into it…” In light of such traditions, Muslim jurists have coined legal maxims such as, “Certainty is not removed by doubt,” and, “Certainty is removed only by equal certainty.” Those jurists, furthermore, affirmed the protection of bodily integrity and sanity to be universal human rights. One may only compromise one’s faith when one’s life is in “imminent” danger. The Qur’an says, “Whoever takes a life for reason other than murder or spreading corruption in the earth, it is as if he has killed all of humanity.” It also says, “Do not kill yourselves. For God is always kind to you.” Informed consent—for example, about the potential and actual reactions associated with the Covid-19 vaccines in adults and children—is a right Islam affords to every person in every sphere of interpersonal interaction. Muslims consider informed consent the foundation of societal trust. For this reason, the Islamic legal tradition ensures this right for future spouses and the parties of all agreements. The Prophet said, “So if they are honest and disclose defects, their agreement will be blessed. But, if they are dishonest and conceal defects, the blessing of their agreement will be obliterated.” The widespread censorship in the major news media and by public health authorities of viewpoints by doctors, scientists, and journalists that express criticism or even caution about the Covid-19 vaccines indicates the lack of informed consent surrounding the mandate. The experimental status of the Covid-19 vaccines and the uncertainty about who may be adversely affected by them, as well as about what their mechanisms for harm or injury may be, make their unrestricted use a risk that Islamic law only countenances in the most extreme circumstances. Currently, considerable debate exists about whether the pandemic, now well into its second year, represents such a circumstance.

Therefore, until long-term studies conclusively address these uncertainties for the entire scientific community or a true consensus emerges about whether the pandemic represents an extreme circumstance, the justifications for compelling otherwise healthy individuals to vaccinate are baseless and sinful for both inoculators and the inoculated. The Qur’an says, “Pursue not what of which you have no knowledge. Verily, one’s hearing, vision, and heart will all be questioned about that.” Moreover, the uncertainty about the effects of the vaccination makes the mandate, which does not take into consideration one’s risk of harm from Covid-19, equivalent to coerced acceptance of religious dogma, while the Qur’an tells us, “There is no compulsion in religion.” Consequently, a Muslim may neither compel nor be compelled to act contrary to his or her conscience. The Prophet Muhammad said, “Sin is whatever weaves into the soul and unsettles the heart even if the people grant you reassurance.” In light of this tradition, Muslim scholars state that something sanctioned by the Shariah (Islamic Law)—for example, if some Muslim jurists grant approval of the Covid-19 vaccines—becomes sinful for a particular Muslim when his conscience tells him he should avoid it. Because the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has declared there to be a “likely” link between heart inflammation and the Pfizer and Moderna Covid vaccines; because there have been a significant number of cases of heart inflammation in 16 to 24 year olds; and because tens of thousands of adverse side effect claims have been made about the Covid-19 vaccines it is my sincere and considered belief that Islamic law forbids **[NAME]**, who is in good health, from taking the Covid-19 vaccine. For **[NAME]**, the potential for harm, whether short or long term, outweighs the potential benefits, especially considering the fact that young healthy adults are highly unlikely to experience severe symptoms or hospitalization from Covid-19. For **[NAME]**, taking the vaccine would be tantamount to preferring doubt over certainty and hazarding life, limb, intellect, and overall happiness. More importantly, the role that conscience plays in personal decisions, the right to refuse medical intervention, the right to informed consent and requesting a Religious Accommodation or Exemption from potential dangers, and the right to refuse to expose one’s body to the unpredictable effects of experimental vaccines are all religious concerns and precepts which contribute to our conscientious objection against this vaccine mandate. Acting contrary to one’s conscience represents a major sin that could be a reason for punishment by God in the Afterlife. For these reasons, I seek exemption for **[NAME]** from compulsory Covid-19 vaccination, so **s/he** can continue to contribute to society’s flourishing. Finally, it is important to note that according to precepts of Islamic jurisprudence, an authoritative opinion such as mine cannot be nullified simply because opposing opinions from other Muslim jurists may exist. Therefore, I hope you will give it due consideration. It accurately reflects the concerns of the petitioner, and I confidently believe it reflects the foundational teachings of Islam. And God alone knows best.

Sincerely,

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