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Measures to Manage Plague Pandemic during the Reign of Hazrat Umar Bin Khattab (R.A) and Modern Pandemic Covid-19: An Analysis in the Light of Islamic Teachings

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Abstract

There are many diseases that affected the human race from ancient times to modern eras. The most severe of the diseases that occurred in the past was plague of *Amwas*, an epidemic that came during the rule of Caliph *Umar ibn al-Khattab (R.A)* in 638–639 CE, the early Islamic kingdom was devastated by the Plague of Amwas, often referred to as the Plague of Emmaus. Estimates claim that tens of thousands of people died as a result of the epidemic, including many well-known Muslim leaders and warriors. Unlike, plague of *Amwas*, covid-19 is also a modern pandemic that has affected people all around the globe. The new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 is the cause of the extremely contagious illness covid-19. It caused a worldwide pandemic after being discovered for the first time in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Globally, the illness has had a significant influence on daily lives. The study contains both the primary and secondary sources. The purpose of conducting research on both the ancient and modern pandemic i.e. plague of *Amwas* and covid-19 is to find out what were the precautionary measures adopted for controlling the disease plague of *Amwas*. The study also investigate the Islamic rulings adopted in earlier time's along with, their implementation in the modern crises of pandemic covid-19. The study found how much it will be helpful in controlling the spread of disease. The researcher came to know that the teachings of Islam are the complete solution for all problems. The researcher also came to know the nature of both the diseases, suffering of the people in the respective times relatively.

Keywords

Quran, Hadith, Allah Almighty, Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H), disease, plague of *Amwas*, covid-19,

Introduction

The early Muslim society was devastated by the plague of *Amwas*, also called the plague of Emmaus, which hit in 639 AD, during *Umar ibn al-Khattab (R.A)*'s reign. This epidemic took place in the Syrian-Palestinian territory, which is today Jordan and Israel, in the town of *Amwas*. According to medical theory, the illness was a variation of the bubonic plague, which decimated the Eastern Roman Empire during the plague of Justinian in the sixth century. The same factors that had sparked previous

epidemics were probably the origins of the plague of *Amwas*. The demographics of the area and the military and administrative capabilities of the early Islamic state were impacted in the long run by the plague of *Amwas*. It also had an impact on Islamic jurisprudence and philosophy about public health and hygiene.

An important episode in the early history of Islam is the plague of *Amwas*, which illustrates the weaknesses of the period as well as the adaptability and tenacity of the early community in the face of a devastating pandemic. Tens of thousands of individuals are said to have died from the disease, many of them soldiers and leaders of the first Muslim army. Prominent individuals who perished from the epidemic included *Muadh ibn Jabal (R.A)*, a close associate of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.), and *Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah (R.A)*, the ruler of Syria. In times of plague, it is customary to remain in a land, highlighting the importance of quarantines and mobility restrictions. Islam emphasizes access to medical care and aiding those in need, as stated in hadiths, to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

In late 2019, Wuhan, China, reported the sickness for the first time. It is thought to have started in bats and may have spread to humans via an animal intermediary host. As a result of the fast global spread of covid-19 and the resulting widespread disease, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared a worldwide pandemic on March 11, 2020. The symptoms of covid-19 can range from moderate to severe and include fever, sore throat, congestion in the lungs, nausea, diarrhoea, exhaustion, muscular or body pains, coughing, shortness of breath, and loss of taste or smell. Severe instances may result in multiple organ failure, pneumonia, which is acute respiratory distress syndrome, and even death. The main way that the virus is transmitted is via respiratory droplets from talking, sneezing, or coughing. Additionally, it can spread by coming into contact with infected surfaces and then contacting the face. Islamic ethics emphasize charitable deeds, aiding the ill, praying, and exercising patience. Special prayers, known as duas, are for protection and healing. The teachings emphasize "la darar wa la dirar," avoiding harm and reciprocation, and empathizing with the sick. These teachings provide a holistic approach to combating illnesses.

They provide a public health perspective that is strikingly applicable even in the modern period. The application of Islamic teachings during the covid-19 pandemic adjusted to the new circumstances brought forth by the international health emergency. These are some significant examples of how Islamic teachings were applied and modified throughout this time. Islam has a high value on hygiene and cleanliness, which became increasingly more important during the pandemic. To stop the infection from spreading, quarantine including home quarantines, regular hand washing a practice strongly ingrained in Islamic ritual cleanliness, or *Wudu* was stressed. These actions were approved because they follow the *Maqasid al-Shariah*, or preservation of life and prevention of injury, an Islamic tenet. In order to prevent communal prayer from aiding in the spread of covid-19, changes were implemented. Several mosques either temporarily shuttered or restricted their hours of operation in order to preserve social distance. It was encouraged for people to offer prayers, particularly the Friday Jumu'ah prayer, at home. The use of online platforms for sermons, religious instruction, and community events preserved the feeling of community while abiding by security regulations.

1. Plague of *Amwas*

Throughout history, Muslim communities have experienced plagues. Muslims were completely destroyed by the first terrible disease under the rule of *Umar Ibn Khattab (R.A)*, the second Caliph and companion of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.)

Yezdigird plague may also be referring to the next name of the plague which was the important epidemic that took place in Syria, Egypt, Palestine and Iraq. The plague which came in Syria was called the plague of *Amwas*. Because it has badly attacked to the army of Arab at *Amwas* and the old Emmaus in the year 17/ 638 or might be 18/639. It has been related by *Sayf ibn Umar (R.A)*, that the plague outbreak of *Amwas* came twice in the months of *Moharram* and in the month of *Safar*, it vanished and also came back and many deaths of the people took place. According to the record of history, twenty-five thousand soldiers of Muslims only died due to this plague of *Amwas*. It was occurred due to famine which has put the population in to severe problem of facing disease epidemic. It might be because of the low resistance of human and the food which is reserved. The attraction in the settlements of human which have brought the plague rats that had infected in contact with the individual closely.

Abu Ubaydah (R.A) was summoned by *Umar (R.A)*, the caliph, to prevent him from death from the plague in 18/639. *Umar (R.A)* concealed the purpose and ordered *Abu Ubaydah* to return. However, *Abu Ubaydah* realized the caliph's intention and refused, preferring to stay in Syria. *Umar (R.A)* held a council for *Ansar* and *Muhajirun*, discussing the *Amwas* plague outbreak. Leaders from the *Quraysh* tribe advised them to leave the area, citing Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.)'s prohibition against Muslims entering or fleeing from plague-stricken areas. *Abu Ubaydah (R.A)* protested against those fleeing from Allah's decree. *Umar (R.A)* wisely responded with a parable about choosing the green side. *Abu Ubaydah (R.A)* was commanded by *Umar (R.A)* for removing army from infected place and caliph had a justified feeling for coming back to *Madinah*. There are three important aspects which have been derived through the teachings of Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) and were very influential for the community of Muslims when the disease had come.

1. From Allah Almighty the plague is regarded mercy and also martyrdom for those Muslims who are faithful, for infidel it's a punishment.¹

حَدَّثَنَا عَنْ أُسَامَةَ بْنِ زَيْدٍ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَكَرَ الطَّاعُونَ فَقَالَ " بَقِيَّةُ رَجْزٍ - أَوْ عَذَابٍ أُرْسِلَ عَلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَلَسْتُمْ فِيهَا فَلَا تَهَيِّطُوا عَلَيْهَا " . قَالَ وَفِي الْبَابِ عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ خُزَيْمَةَ وَخُزَيْمَةَ بْنِ ثَابِتٍ وَعَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ وَجَابِرِ وَعَائِشَةَ . قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى حَدِيثُ أُسَامَةَ بْنِ زَيْدٍ حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ .²

Usamah bin Zaid (R.A) narrated that the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) mentioned the plague and said: "It is an abiding punishment or chastisement that was sent upon a group of the children of Israel. So when it occurs in a land while you are in it, then do not leave it. And when it occurs in a land while you are not in it, then do not enter it".

2. Muslims shall not enter the land or flee from that land where the plague has stricken.
3. For plague, no contagion is there, because from Allah Almighty directly it came.³

Abu Musa al-Ashari advised his friends not to stay in *Kufah* due to an ill person suffering from the *Amwas* plague. *Abu Ubaydah (R.A)* led an army to Harun's highlands, but his death occurred at *Al-Jabiyah*. *Muadh Ibn Jabl (R.A)* succeeded him but died immediately. Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.)'s companions, *Yazid ibn Abi Sufiyan*, *Abu Obadiah (R.A)*, and *Muadh bin Jabl (R.A)* led from epidemic plague. In 669, plague struck *Kufah*, and *Al-Mughirah ibn Shubah* fled, dying in 670. *Amwas* plague returned in 673.⁴ Plague of *Amwas* in Egypt was also reported in the year 686.

Plague of *Amwas* was a disease that has prolific nature. No group, class, race, sex, age and nation were safe from this epidemic.⁵ Muslims gathered in an open area to offer prayers to stop the spread of the *Amwas* plague. Large numbers of attendees and their leaders, or *alkaba'ir*, stepped outside. The epidemic worsened, causing more deaths. Similar to the response in Syria, Muslims in Cairo, Egypt, also held large-scale public prayers in an open area. According to *Ibn Hajar*: On the 4th of Jumadil Ula, the congregation fasted three days before praying, leading to a sudden increase in fatalities in Cairo, surpassing 1,000 in a single day after a month of public prayer.⁶

The methods used to combat epidemics, such as large-scale public prayers, did not improve the situation but worsened the disease. More measures should have been taken to avoid repeating mistakes, possibly due to a lack of common understanding of epidemic spread. The *Amwas* epidemic significantly influenced Muslim responses to subsequent plagues, requiring a theologically valid response based on the Qur'an and Prophetic Hadith. Muslims base their response on three Islamic precepts: a plague is a heavenly blessing, martyrs are those who perish, Muslims are not allowed to enter or leave plague-affected areas, and plagues are not contagious.⁷

1.1. Plague or *Taun*

The meaning of the word ‘*taun*’ in classical language of Arabic is plague. The term *waba* is used in general form which means pestilence or epidemic.⁸ The historian named *Al-Baladhuri* told that *taun* and *waba* have struck those who were living in Kufa. A tradition of Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) is there which warns that when *taun* come not any Muslim should enter there, if they are not present there.⁹

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبَّاسٍ، قَالَ قَالَ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ عَوْفٍ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ

" إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَا تُقَدِّمُوا عَلَيْهِ وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا فِرَارًا مِنْهُ " . يَعْنِي الطَّاعُونَ .¹⁰

“It was narrated that *Abdullah bin Abbas* said: *Abdur -Rahman bin Awf* said: ‘I heard the Messenger of Allah Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) says: If you hear of it (the plague) in a land, do not go there, and if it occurs in a land where you are, do not depart, fleeing from it.’”

The health of public was main due to the problem of air which is corrupted. People used to consider the quality and kind of air where they wanted to reside. They avoid choosing that place which was close to industries, lime kiln, works of smelting, and furnaces, those cities in which the streets were narrow and large buildings were there. When there were pestilence, spices and the incense were believed that they easily restore the air and have protection from diseases.¹¹ But Allah Almighty also says in Quran,

وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا ۚ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ۝¹²

“No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, Allah is All Knower, All Aware (of things)”.

In the 14th century, the treatise of plague of *Amwas* in Arabic language, the maxim which encounters repeatedly is that, “*waba* is said to the *taun* of all kind, but *taun* is not meant for all kinds of *waba*.”¹³

Al-Nawawi discusses early lexicographers who equated waba with taun, a term used to describe diseases and natural disasters. However, this was not always the case, as writers from the initial four eras of Islam used these terms to refer to specific illnesses and the general concept of the plague of Amwas. The distinction between the two is deliberate, as *wabiha* refers to the mediaeval Arabic term for "epidemic" and taun, "to pierce, stab".¹⁴ The term "waba" in Arabic medical treatises from the Middle Ages refers to a wide range of diseases, while "taun" refers to specific illnesses with specific causes and symptoms. Classic Graeco-Arabic treatises show a relationship between Greek concepts and the Islamic notion of waba. Arabic translations of these treatises often focus on epidemics, making the root waba less prevalent. Variations in word use suggest environmental corruption is linked to waba.¹⁵ In another hadith of Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) there comes,

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ:

" غَطُّوا الْإِنَاءَ وَأَوْكُوا السِّقَاءَ فَإِنَّ فِي السَّنَةِ لَيْلَةً يَنْزِلُ فِيهَا وَبَاءٌ لَا يَمُرُّ بِإِنَاءٍ لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ

غِطَاءٌ أَوْ سِقَاءٍ لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ وَكَاءٌ إِلَّا نَزَلَ فِيهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْوَبَاءِ " .¹⁶

It was narrated that *Jabir bin Abdullah* said: "I heard the Messenger Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) of Allah Almighty says: Cover the vessels and tie up the water skins, for there is one night in the year when pestilence descends, and it does not pass by any vessel that is not covered or any water skin that is not tied up, but some of that pestilence descends in to it."

There comes in Quran that,

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ ۖ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ ۖ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ¹⁷

"No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but is inscribed in the Book of Decrees (*Al-Lauh Al-Mahfooz*), before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah Almighty."

Al-Yaqubi criticizes Syria for its pestilential air and erratic weather, linked to the Nile. *Sughar*, a southern region in Syria, has a deadly climate, dirty water, and hot weather. *Al-Qazwini* explains that the generation is spontaneous, with insects created to clean air. *Al-Tabari* discusses the spread of corruption, leading to diseases like *Salima* and *Taun*, and the need to check corruption.¹⁸ *Ibn Qutaybah* identifies *taun* and *judham* as two epidemics, a small pox disease that *Quraysh* people fear before Islam. In medieval times, epidemic outbreaks occurred in *Mecca* and *Madinah*, with *waba* afflicting the sacred place *Madinah*. In *Mecca*, fear for *waba* led to Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.)'s infancy, and later in *Madinah*.¹⁹ There is also literature present which states on other hand, that plague did not, came in *Mecca* and *Madinah*. In hadith, there comes that,

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي مَالِكٌ، عَنْ نُعَيْمِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْمُجَمِّرِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ. رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

" عَلَى أَنْقَابِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَلَائِكَةٌ، لَا يَدْخُلُهَا الطَّاعُونَ وَلَا الدَّجَالُ " .²⁰

Narrated *Abu Hurairah (R.A)*: Allah Almighty's Messenger Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) said: "There are angels guarding the entrances or roads of *Al-Madinah*, neither plague nor *Ad-Dajjal* can enter it."

Ibn Qutaybah, say that the list of *tawin* that was compiled by philologist named *Al-Asma'I* in 828 AD. It indicates that in his present time, *taun* was never come out even in the *Meccan* city or in his city.²¹ There comes in the Hadith for the *Haramayn* protection from plague of *Amwas* has said to be an indication of Allah Almighty's honor. Several hadith traditions are there which are well-known among people like, Christ, Anti-Christ and *taun*, which will never come in *Madinah*.²² *Al-Smahudi's* history of *Madinah* emphasizes the city's security from epidemic plagues. Before the Black Death, *Haramayn* had no plague. The epidemic infected *Madinah* in 881, but it spread to nearby villages. J. L Burckhardt observed the outbreak in 1815 at *Yanbu*, *Madinah's* port. When it reached *Mecca*, the population was shocked, but *Madinah* remained safe.²³ In start of four centuries of Islam, the plague of *Amwas* was considered as a kind of *waba*, the corruption of pestilential disease which has not spread in *Madinah* or *Mecca*.²⁴ When the natural atmosphere gets corrupted through pestilential air it is said as *waba*.²⁵ According to *Al-Razi* when he says in his book *Al-Hawi fi'l tibb*, that *taun* is identified as a swelling of glands of lymph which is present in Axillae, back side of an ear and groin. The gland which is affected is much closer towards organ such as brain, liver and heart which generates humors excessively that is the condition for swelling. This information is given in the source of *Al-Razi* named "*Jawami Ighlawqun*, its Arabic version is *Summaria Alexandrinorum*.²⁶ *Taun*, a term used to describe blotches, pustules, and other skin manifestations caused by plague bacterium bacilli, is a deadly epidemic of camels. The proverb "*ghuddah*" in Arabic is used to identify plague. *Amir Ibn al-Tafayl*, chief of *Banu SA'SA'SA*, threatened Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) about the reward for embracing Islam, but was met with threats and left with his men.²⁷ And *Amir* was going to his home back to territory, Allah Almighty results him to strike by *taun* in the neck of him. When the tongue of *Amir* comes out from mouth in agony, he staggers at the place of women which belongs from *Banu Salul*. It was the clan which the rest tribes have scorned as despicable.²⁸ *Al-Asma'I* in its book named *Kitab al-ibl* has given the information which discusses the terminology of Arabic which concerns with camels. It includes the chapter regarding the infection of camels. As it has been seen that *ghuddah* strikes in genitals, throat, groin, and axillae. When it appears in the region of groin, its protruding part can be seen clearly.²⁹

2. Novel Corona virus (nCovid-19)

The new virus was first known as 2019-nCoV since it was discovered to be a novel coronavirus. Later, it was dubbed severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), and the World Health Organisation now refers to the illness it produces as Coronavirus Disease-2019 (covid-19). It was believed that the Huanan seafood wholesale market in the Wuhan area was where the virus first started to spread. The virus could have spread across the packed market as a result of an animal brought into or bought there that was infected. A paper that was published in the Journal of Medical Virology, identifying snakes as a potential host, had one of the earliest assertions. While the most plausible explanation is that the virus originated in bats, a second hypothesis was that SARS-CoV-2 may live in pangolins in the wild. Experts and data are increasingly pointing to the virus's natural genesis in bats, as they did with other respiratory viruses of this type. Similarly, bats were thought to be the source of both MERS and SARS. The dromedary camel is an intermediate host in the MERS case (5, 10). It

has long been recognised that bats may carry coronaviruses. Similar to SARS, MERS, bird flu, and potentially even HIV, the virus spread from animals to humans as a result of increased ecological pressure and selection brought on by human activity. The majority of China and Africa have seen an increase in the encroachment of humans into their woods.³⁰

The subfamily "Coronavirinae" includes four genera: alpha, beta, gamma, and delta coronaviruses. Gamma and delta coronaviruses primarily attack birds, while beta and alpha coronaviruses cause damage to humans and animals. Beta-coronaviruses, including highly pathogenic ones like SARS-CoV-2, MERS-CoV, and SARS-CoV, are most significant. Bats are the original hosts.³¹ Covid-19 initially appeared to be limited to China and the Diamond Princess, but by April 2020, it affected over 210 nations and regions, with the USA, Iran, and Europe leading the world in confirmed cases.³² The Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention discovered a new coronavirus on January 7, 2020, from a hospitalized patient's throat swab sample. The World Health Organization confirmed it on January 9, 2020.³³ In 2002, SARS-CoV first appeared in Guangdong, China, causing a pandemic that spread to 28 countries, resulting in 8096 cases and 774 fatalities.³⁴

2.1. Symptoms

The symptoms of covid-19 can range widely, from being asymptomatic to acute respiratory distress syndrome, although they most frequently involve the respiratory system and are accompanied by fever. The three primary clinical signs of covid-19 are lethargy, fever, and dry cough. Low-grade fever, moderate tiredness, and no indications of pneumonia are possible in mild instances. After a week, severe individuals could have dyspnea and/or hypoxemia. Multiple organ dysfunction syndrome (MODS), ARDS, septic shock, metabolic acidosis, coagulation failure, and other conditions might develop in critical instances.

2.2. Transmission

Covid-19 spreads from person to person, with aerosols remaining viable for three hours. SARS-CoV-2 is more stable on plastic and stainless steel, with an incubation period of three to seven days and up to two weeks. Transmission occurs through sneezing or coughing, and in enclosed areas with poor ventilation.³⁵ Islam, the religion of humanity, places a strong emphasis on human safety and forbids the use of suicide and other unusual methods of dying. In a same vein, one of the goals of Islamic knowledge is the preservation of bodily well-being and health.³⁶ Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) said,

حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " لَا ضَرَرَ وَلَا ضِرَارَ " .³⁷

“There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm.”

Islam also places a strong emphasis on preserving human life, regardless of a person's ethnicity or creed.³⁸ Allah Almighty stated in the Quran,

وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا ﴿٣٩﴾

“and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind”.

Islamic teachings, like those of Prophet Mohammad, emphasize a healthy lifestyle and quarantining practices to prevent diseases, making them relevant in the fight against

covid-19.⁴⁰ Preventive actions are crucial to stop the spread of covid-19, including quarantine, contact tracking, sanitization, and wearing personal protective equipment, as there is no effective cure.⁴¹ A few of the prophetic recommendations about pandemics may be applied to the covid-19 pandemic of today and align with the important recommendations made by medical experts and organisations like the World Health Organisation and the US Centres for Disease Control.⁴² To prevent covid-19, wash hands frequently, maintain social distance, avoid touching lips, nose, or eyes, maintain good respiratory health, seek medical attention if symptoms occur, stay educated, and avoid shaking hands.⁴³

2.3. Preventive and Precautionary Measures

A. Cleanliness

The covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of maintaining cleanliness, a concept referred to as al-nazafah in Arabic, from personal appearance to surroundings.⁴⁴ A sick individual can be defined as a covid-19 patient.⁴⁵ Illness is an abnormal body or mind state that disrupts normal functioning, causing discomfort, dysfunction, or difficulty, and disrupting work or activities.⁴⁶ According to the Shariah, one of the reasons for alleviation is pain. The Quran and Hadith include a wealth of knowledge on QS and other forms of medical assistance.⁴⁷ There comes in Quran that,

أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَةً ۚ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَىٰ الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ
مِسْكِينٍ

فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ⁴⁸

“(Observing *Saum* (fasts)) for a fixed number of days, but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days. And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man, etc.), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a *Miskeen* (poor person) (for every day). But whoever does good of his own accord, it is better for him. And that you fast, it is better for you if only you know.”

In order for people to worship Allah Almighty without burdens or problems, Allah Almighty grants respite to those who are sick in accordance with their ailment or what they are going through. Scholars concur that those who are ill will find comfort even if worshipping makes them worse, heals more slowly, or damages their limbs.⁴⁹ Covid-19 poses a threat to diverse religious, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds, necessitating medical recommendations for proper hand hygiene and personal and public care.⁵⁰ Patients awaiting test results and those with no symptoms should follow guidelines, avoid contact, limit visits, and hide faces when interacting with others.⁵¹

B. Hand Hygiene

World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes regular hand washing for covid-19 prevention, as it helps eradicate viruses and reduce their presence on contaminated surfaces, a religious aspect also valued in Islam.⁵² As Allah Almighty states in the Quran on cleanliness that,

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَجِيزِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذَىٰ فَاعْتَزِلُوا الْبَسَاءَ فِي الْمَجِيزِ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهَرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ
مِنْ حَيْثُ

أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ⁵³

“Truly, Allah Almighty loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves (by taking a bath and cleaning and washing thoroughly their private parts, bodies, for their prayers, etc.)”

The World Health Organization states that hand washing with soap and water is the most important thing to do since it reduces the transmission of disease.⁵⁴ People should prioritize excellent hygiene, including frequent handwashing, avoiding outdoor travel, and avoiding unclean areas like marketplaces. This will significantly improve community health by maintaining clean surroundings.⁵⁵

C. Face covering

Patients or persons should hide their faces if they must interact closely with others. Although a medical mask is advised, a cotton face mask should be used in its place if one is not available. The number of carers around should be kept to a minimum if the patient or persons need the services of the carers.⁵⁶ Wu Lien Teh, a pioneer in disease control, recognized cloth masks as a crucial personal protection tool during the 1910 Manchurian Plague. Although cloth masks were initially created, face coverings were advised for respiratory pandemics since the 14th century. Despite the covid-19 pandemic, mask wearing remains common in East Asia to prevent respiratory illnesses.⁵⁷ A portion of the face is protected with respiratory masks (RM).⁵⁸ Their purpose is to shield the wearer from breathing contaminants (such respiratory toxins or bacterial/viral pathogenic organisms) as well as the surrounding environment.⁵⁹

D. Sneezing and coughing etiquette

Other things like yawning and sneezing contribute to the covid-19 virus's transmission. Viral droplets in the air from an infected individual can infect a healthy one. It should be remembered that although Islam celebrated sneezing, it saw yawning as an act of *Satan* and advised against it altogether. It also covered the measures that must be taken to deal with sneezing.⁶⁰ The World Health Organisation (WHO) emphasizes the importance of proper respiratory hygiene to prevent pandemic spread. Covering the face with tissue or a bent elbow when coughing, sneezing, or speaking can help prevent virus transmission.⁶¹ The following Hadith describes proper respiratory behaviour as,

حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ إِذَا عَطَسَ غَطَّىٰ وَجْهَهُ بِيَدِهِ أَوْ بِثَوْبِهِ وَعَضَّ بِهَا صَوْتَهُ.⁶²

Narrated *Abu Hurairah*: “that when the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) would sneeze, he would cover his face with his hand or with his garment, and muffle the sound with it”. (*Hassan Sahih*).

Covid-19 is transmitted through coughing, sneezing, and unintentional breathing, and can be contracted at any age, with severe cases more common in the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions.⁶³ The same rule applies to original and comparable cases or

subjects, including coughing, as jurisprudential principles state that the reasoning for rulings is the same in both situations.

E. Social Distancing

The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes the importance of physical separation and social distance in reducing covid-19 transmission. Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) advises against mingling diseased livestock with healthy ones and never house sick individuals next to well ones.⁶⁴ There comes in a hadith that,

حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. "لَا يُورِدُ الْمُمْرِضُ عَلَى الْمُصِحِّ"⁶⁵

It was narrated from *Abu Hurairah (R.A)* that the Messenger of Allah Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) said: "A man with sick camels should not let them graze or drink alongside healthy ones."^(Hassan)

The Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) urged people to avoid close contact with one another in order to prevent the spread of illness.⁶⁶ He declared:

قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَفِرَّ مِنَ الْمَجْدُومِ كَمَا تَفِرُّ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ.⁶⁷

It has been narrated by *Abu Hurairah (R.A)*, that Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) said, "...and one should run away from the leper, as one runs away from the lion".

The "social distancing" strategy, including closing businesses, avoiding crowds, isolating suspected cases, quarantining those in contact, and enforcing mandatory lockdowns and quarantines, is being recommended to combat covid-19.⁶⁸

F. Quarantine

The Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) frequently advised his adherents to respect their lives by teaching them to appreciate Hadith. The idea of quarantine was first introduced by Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) around 1400 years ago.⁶⁹ He quoted from a well-known hadith that said,

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ عَوْفٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَا تَقْدَمُوا عَلَيْهِ وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا فِرَارًا مِنْهُ."⁷⁰

Narrated *Abdullah bin 'Amir*:

Umar went to *Sham* and when he reached *Sargh*, he got the news that an epidemic (of plague) had broken out in *Sham*. *Abdur-Rahman bin Auf* told him that Allah's Messenger Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) said, "If you hear that it (plague) has broken out in a land, do not go to it; but if it breaks out in a land where you are present, do not go out escaping from it."

Stated differently, an individual suffering from a disease is barred from leaving the affected region, and healthy people are also prohibited from entering the area.⁷¹ The implementation of quarantine principles has proven effective in mitigating the spread of illness by limiting the mobility of affected individuals and isolating viral carriers.⁷² Similar advice has been followed

in the case of the present covid-19 epidemic, as per the hadith mentioned above from the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.).⁷³

G. Home Quarantine

In certain situations, staying at home is undoubtedly a wise choice, but not in all (tsunami, fire, etc.). Nonetheless, this approach is strongly advised during the covid-19 pandemic and can aid in lowering activities related to the transmission of the illness. As a result, the Quran highlighted how important it is to be at home.⁷⁴ There comes in a hadith that,

حَدَّثَنِي عَائِشَةُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. أَخْبَرْتُهُ أَنَّهَا، سَأَلَتْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ الطَّاعُونَ فَقَالَ " كَانَ عَذَابًا يَبْعَثُهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ، فَجَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ رَحْمَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ، مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يَكُونُ فِي بَلَدٍ يَكُونُ فِيهِ، وَيَمْكُثُ فِيهِ، لَا يَخْرُجُ مِنَ الْبَلَدِ، صَابِرًا مُحْتَسِبًا، يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا يُصِيبُهُ إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ، إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ شَهِيدٍ " ⁷⁵

Narrated Aisha:

"I asked Allah's Messenger Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) about the plague. He said, "That was a means of torture which Allah Almighty used to send upon whom-so-ever He wished, but He made it a source of mercy for the believers, for anyone who is residing in a town in which this disease is present, and remains there and does not leave that town, but has patience and hopes for Allah Almighty's reward, and knows that nothing will befall him except what Allah Almighty has written for him, then he will get such reward as that of a martyr."

H. Patience

Muslims should approach the covid-19 outbreak with caution and patience, avoiding frustration and hopelessness. The epidemic serves as a test for followers, and success with patience brings immense delight from Allah Almighty.⁷⁶ There comes in surah 2 of Quran, verse, 155 that,

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْأَتْمَرِ ۗ تَوَّابٌ ۗ وَبَشِيرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ⁷⁷

And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to *As-Sabirin* (the patient ones, etc.)

The terrible worldwide effects of the ongoing covid-19 pandemic serve as a warning about the possible harm that newly developing infectious illnesses might do. Thankfully, modern society is better prepared to face this rising monster. Without a doubt, covid-19 is an once-in-a-lifetime epidemic.⁷⁸

Analysis

The Plague of Amwas, also known as the Plague of Emmaus, occurred in 639 AD and destroyed early Muslim culture in the Syrian-Palestinian region. It was a variant of the bubonic plague, similar to the sixth-century Plague of Justinian. The disease affected the local population, military, administrative capacities, and influenced public health and hygiene thought. Notable deaths included Syrian king Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah and Prophet Mohammad's close friend Muadh ibn Jabal.

Islamic beliefs about plague and sicknesses mostly come from Islamic law, the Qur'an, and Hadith (the sayings and deeds of Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.)). The practical epidemic control techniques, religion, hygiene, and community service are all heavily emphasised in these teachings. People view plagues as Allah Almighty's trials. It is stated that these disasters are a test of one's patience and faith in the Qur'an. Muslims are encouraged to place their trust and confidence in Allah Almighty throughout trying times. Islam places a strong emphasis on cleanliness and hygiene, both of which are crucial for halting the transmission of disease. The need of maintaining personal hygiene, covering one's mouth when sneezing, and washing one's hands was emphasised by the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.).

Wuhan, China, first reported the illness at the end of 2019. It is believed to have originated in bats and may have transferred to humans through an intermediate animal host. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) proclaimed a global pandemic due to the rapid global spread of covid-19 and the ensuing widespread sickness. Covid-19 symptoms can vary in severity from mild to severe, including fever, sore throat, lung congestion, nausea, diarrhoea, tiredness, body or muscle aches, coughing, dyspnea, and loss of taste or smell. Severe cases can lead to multiple organ failure, acute respiratory distress syndrome (pneumonia), and possibly death. The virus is mostly spread by respiratory droplets from coughing, sneezing, and talking. It can also spread by touching the face after coming into contact with contaminated objects.

Islamic ethics emphasize charitable actions, prayer, and patience during difficult times. Muslims practice duas for healing and protection, adhering to "la darar wa la dirar." These teachings combine faith, action, and community service to combat diseases and plagues. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Islamic principles were applied, including regular hand washing, collective prayer, mosque closures, Friday Jumu'ah prayers, and online preaching, religious education, and community gatherings.

Conclusion

On concluding the study, the reader will come to know that plague of *Amwas* was one of the devastating catastrophe that had happened in the past. It has killed a number of people. There are many traditions of Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) present from which individuals seek guidance and they also followed at the time of plague about avoiding the disease. On the other hand, the covid-19 is also another pandemic disease which came in this modern era. It also has brutally affected the lives of people all over the world. This pandemic brought out many difficulties, but it also demonstrated how Islamic principles might be used to modern problems. Islamic traditions were successfully incorporated into the pandemic response by highlighting health, hygiene, community solidarity, and the moral need to preserve life. This gave the Muslim community both spiritual and practical direction which they followed in this crises of time as well. The Islamic teachings are meant for all the times as they are the complete solution for all the problems which are present in Quran and given by Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.).

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