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## Leprosy Disease: An Islamic Historical and Pakistani Context

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### Abstract

Leprosy disease or the disease of Hasan is a very chronic and contagious disease which occurs due to bacteria named mycobacterium Leprae. It is one of those ancient diseases which inflicted individuals all over the globe; along with, many people at Arab in early times of Islam. There was no cure of this disease and many people died. It also affected people at the time of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh); as well as, in the Ummayyid and Abbasid dynasties. In Islam, different kinds of terminologies are used for the leprosy disease such as *baras* and *jhadham*. All the kinds of leprosy disease such as borderline kind, lepromatous and tuberculoid are very severe kind of diseases. It affects an individual psychologically, mentally, physically, socially and economically. In early times, this disease was regarded incurable. But on the other hand, Allah Almighty has not made any disease of which there is no cure. At an early phase the medicine or vaccine for curing patient was not available. The purpose of conducting research on Leprosy disease is to find the Islamic account on leprosy disease; along with, the rulings of Islam on those afflicted with leprosy disease. The research also find out that how it affects an individual and what attempts have been made from an early time till now for controlling and combating the disease. The reader will come to know about the causes and effects of leprosy disease. The teachings of Quran and hadith of the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) for the affected lepers. They will also come to know about the preventive and precautionary measures along with initiatives made for the leprosy disease patients. Lastly, they will also come to know that in the global world, Pakistan being the first Asian country recognized by World Health Organization in controlling the disease.

**Keywords:** Leprosy, disease, Quran, Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), Hadith

### Introduction

According to historical and archeological records, the leprosy disease date back according to the two proofs of skeleton from 500 AD. It is the disease which had affected all the people around the globe. The leprosy disease is caused by the bacteria named mycobacterium leprae. This bacteria stays in the body for a longer period such as thirty years. The nature of disease is contagious and is easily transmissible to another

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person. It transfers when the affected individual breathes in an open environment through an air droplets. It also affects other when an affected individual use to cough and sneezes in front of others. The leprosy disease causing bacteria affects the eyes, peripheral nerves, nose, skin and mouth. It weakens the immune system of the affected person. It badly affects the bones due to which the bones become altered, deformed and destructive. The skeleton badly affects as their occurs changes in the skeleton of an individual who is affected with the disease such as changes in cranial region that affects the face and mouth. Along with, the post-cranial region which affects the entire body.

There are different kinds of leprosy disease such as borderline leprosy disease which is a worst and causes macules, papules and plaques. It causes irregular edges and lesions. As it affects the skin badly. Secondly, lepromatous is another kind which affects the face and nose region. It causes swelling. Nerves are also affected from it. It damages the hair, eyebrows, skin and causes sores. Whereas in tuberculoid kind of leprosy disease, the lymph nodes, peripheral nerves and skin get affected. It causes ulcers, blisters on hands and feet and numbness and weakens the muscles. It causes disabilities and the person is unable to perform the social activities. As it affects an individual physically, psychologically, socially, economically and mentally. There are different terminologies used for leprosy in Islam in Arabic language such as *baras* and *jhadham* based on their meanings as described by the Arabic lexicographers and the physicians.

When Islam began, the Quran has stated regarding the healing of those who are suffering from leprosy disease through Jesus. Among the family of *Pharaoh*, there was a member who found the little baby, she had leprosy disease. The physician advised her that for the purpose of therapy she should take bathe in river Nile. It has been reported that the moment she opens the baby basket and had a glance on that child *Moses*. She was cured from the leprosy disease miraculously. This is the remembrance of the rewards which had been given to *Hazrat Eisa (R.A)* and to his mother. Allah Almighty made him learn writing and also given him the knowledge of the book of *Torah* which was with *Bani Israel*. Besides that Allah Almighty has blessed him with the miracles. When a blind innate come, then due to the command of Allah Almighty he will get the vision. The cure of the disease he used to do without any medicine. He also cures the lepers.

When *Hazrat Umar (R.A)* went to *Al-Jabiayah*, *Umar* encounter a colony of the lepers of Christians in grief. Provisions were made by him about their feeding and supporting them. Such a small incident signifies the presence of separate groups of those who are lepers in the region of Palestine. The government treasury, known as *bail-ul-mal*, was operational throughout the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) but was legally created under the reign of *Hazrat Umar (R.A)*. It was also used to supply food in the event of a famine or natural disaster. Since leprosy is seen as a fatal illness, a person afflicted with the condition has restricted responsibilities. Because the sickness is objectionable on a moral and bodily level. It's possible that the customs strengthened the desire of many Muslims to avoid contact with those who were visibly ill. The tactics it includes are avoiding crowds, isolating oneself, and strictly maintaining social distance.

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The first Muslim who established *bimaristan* was a caliph named *Al-Walid* of Umayyad period in the year 707 A.D in Damascus. In the period of Abbasid, a leprosarium was set up by *Al-Walid* in such a way that provides facilities to the lepers, crippled, lame, and blind. The credit for the establishment of first *bimaristan* goes to *Yahiya ibn Khalid ibn Barmak* who was an Abbasid. First hospital for Muslim was built in North side of Africa in *Al-Qayrawan* which is *Ifriqiyah's* capital in the year 830 A.D. It was also called the hospital of *Dimnah*. In its close proximity, a building is situated which was separate, is known as *Dar al-Judhamam*. The name of the hospital of Muslim in Damascus is *hawsh al-qa'atilah*. In Pakistan, the disease is under control. Due to the efforts of Dr. Ruth Pfau and her team, because she spent her whole life in serving patients suffering from those having leprosy disease. MALC is a center for treating and curing patients of leprosy in Karachi, Pakistan. According to World Health Organization (WHO), Pakistan is regarded as the first country of Asia in treating, controlling and curing leprosy. People from all around the globe used to come for their treatment who suffers from leprosy.

### 1. Leprosy Disease

<sup>1</sup>As early as 600 BC, an exact description of leprosy disease was first documented in India. A little later, Chinese documents exist on leprosy disease. These descriptions most likely include a wide range of skin diseases. Additionally, the Bible's depiction does not match the clinical characteristics of leprosy disease. Leprosy disease most likely made its way to the Mediterranean region when Alexander the Great's army returned from their mission in India in 327 BC, bringing the illness with them to the Roman empires and Greek empires. In the fourth century AD, Christians in Rome founded the first hospitals known to treat leprosy cases. <sup>2</sup> Leprosy disease, caused by mycobacterium *Leprae*, is a chronic disease causing deformity and physical disabilities worldwide. It is communicable and affects 95% of the global population. Over the past two decades, efforts from the World Health Organization, health professionals, non-governmental organizations, and local governments have led to nearly 90% reduction in leprosy cases worldwide. <sup>3</sup>

The most widely recognised explanation holds that the bacilli are released from an infected person's nose and must then enter the airways of another person. Mycobacterium *leprae* mostly affects the skin, peripheral nerves, mouth, nose, and eyes in humans after infection. The disease's clinical manifestations are brought on by the bacteria's growth within the body, the immune system's reaction to the bacilli's invasion, and the inflammation of peripheral nerves, which is the body's reaction to the first two aspects.<sup>4</sup> Hansen's illness, a rare historical and archaeological illness, causes significant bone alterations, making it one of the few identifiable illnesses in the historical record. These alterations are disruptive and absorptive, causing unique skeletal changes, including post-cranial changes and cranial changes. *Facies leprosa*, a cranial abnormality, affects the nose, causing mouth perforation, tooth loss, and nose deformity. Post-cranial changes include erosion of hand and foot bones.<sup>5</sup>

## **2. Kinds of Leprosy Disease**

The simple form of leprosy disease has its affect upon the skin. It causes swelling, and patches appear on face in red color. If human system of immune does not cope with; it results in to the three kinds of leprosy disease. It is in the borderline form, lepromatous form and the other type is of tuberculosis.

### **2.1. Borderline Kind of Leprosy Disease**

It is the worst form which is not stable part. And the leper goes in downwards in leprosy disease of lepromatous or may in upgrade to the leprosy disease of tuberculosis. Many of the skin lesions is said to be the plagues, papules or it may be macules. It can also vary in the distribution, shape along with size. The lesions which appear in annular form having broad, and irregularity in edges and punched out center which is defined sharply are characterized as the leprosy disease for broad line type.

### **2.2. The Types of Lepromatous**

The face skin and nose becomes thickens, due to which on face, the swelling appears. If it does not treat, it breaks the cartilage on nose. The appearance of nose seems to have been carved. Nerves also get affected which can control over the glands such as sebaceous and sweat. It can result in the loss of hair, eyebrows get lost, cracks appeared on dry skin, and sores which are open, can be infectious.

### **2.3. Leprosy Disease of Tubercloid**

Due to this kind of leprosy disease, cutaneous, lymph nodes or regional side, skin, nerves of periphery get affected. The lesions on skin are well-defined, dry, single usually, indurated, hypo pigmented, scaly, and loss of hair partially or completely. Patient is suffering from tingling, ulcers, numbness, blisters on feets and the hands. Muscles get wasted and also weakened, contractures and foot and the wrist drop.<sup>6</sup>

## **3. Islamic Literature on Leprosy Disease**

The world of Islam has gained the terminology of Arabic about leprosy disease in early times. The Word *judham* was referred to the infection because the route of Arabic has a sense for the cut off. It explains the extreme disability which appears in the kind of lepromatous leprosy disease. So, for *judham*, the plural is *jadhna* which might refers to mutilated, foot or arm which has been cut; leper or it may be leprous. Another word *Baras* occurs which is old, its derivative has come from root of Arabic language which means shiny or white. *Baras* is defined as leprosy disease in initial stages or in the form of tubercloid. It might have applied also to the other disorders of skin.<sup>7</sup> Arabic lexicographers describe *Baras* as a condition characterized by skin patches, similar to Hasan's discoloration. *Judham*, a term for truncation of toes and fingers, is also known as *Baras*. John Hutchinson's medical work describes three forms of leprosy disease: black leprosy disease (elephantiasis), white leprosy disease (leuce), and anaesthetic leprosy disease. Early Arabs believed the gecko, known as *samm abras*, was the source

of leprosy. Persian physician *Ali ibn Sahl Rabbani* explained judham's condition, including eyebrow falls, shrinking nails, de-shaped toes, and thin nose.<sup>8</sup>

In the early era of Islam, those who were afflicted with *Baras* or *judham*, indicates the cases of leprosy disease were genuine.<sup>9</sup> Leprosy disease in the society of Islam originates in wide pattern. For leprosy disease, the reference are not easy to indicate, which are few and is not possible to interpret in short way. Leprosy disease with other transferrable infections is widely spread in some places in *Arabia* historically. But in between *Quraysh*, it was not clear as was Prophet Mohammad (pbuh)'s tribe. In the past, first who suffered from the disease of leprosy was named as *Jadhimah al-Abrash* or *Al-Waddah*. He was the Hirah's king who played a significant role in Iraq and Syria in politics in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>10</sup> In Islam, the two renowned poets had also struck by the disease of leprosy.<sup>11</sup> Firstly, *Abid ibn al-Abras* and secondly, *Al-Harith ibn Hillizah al-Yashkuri*.<sup>12</sup>

It is narrated that oldest physician of *Arab* named *Al-Harith ibn Kaladah* along with Prophet Mohammad (pbuh)'s companion who had treated. *An-Nushajani* whom leprosy disease has struck in the place *At-Taif*. When Islam began, the Quran has stated regarding the healing of those who are suffering from leper through Jesus.<sup>13</sup> The commentators of the Quran of classical times have not explained the meaning of the term of *Al-Abrash*. The story of biblical about Moses have recounted by Quran. The signs was given by Allah Almighty to him; among those signs one sign is of oases when he placed the hand over body of his own and was shown white, “there was no evil. According to the commentators this term means that there is no basis.<sup>14</sup> Quran commentators found a leprosy-sick baby in a *Pharaoh* family's basket. The mother was miraculously cured by bathing in the Nile River. The daughter and father prayed for the child's life, recognizing it as a blessed child. The Quran mentions Jesus' healing for leprosy patients through Allah's permission, highlighting his interactions with those suffering from the disease.

There comes in Quran that:

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يُعِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ادْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدتُّكَ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ - تَكَلَّمَ النَّاسُ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَإِذْ تَخَلَّقُ مِنَ الطَّيْنِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنكَ إِذْ جُنَّتْهُمُ بِالْبَيْتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ<sup>15</sup>

“And on the Day of Judgment will say, “O Jesus, son of Marry! Remember My favor upon you and your mother...How you healed the blind and the lepers-by My Will.....“This is nothing but pure magic.”<sup>16</sup>

The wordings of the hadith are:

قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي عَمْرَةَ، أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ. رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّهُ، سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ " إِنَّ ثَلَاثَةً فِي بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أُبْرَصَ وَأَفْرَعَ وَأَعْمَى بَدَأَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُبْتَلِيَهُمْ، فَبَعَثَ إِلَيْهِمْ مَلَكًا، فَأَتَى الأَبْرَصَ. فَقَالَ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ

قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ حَسَنًا وَجِلْدًا حَسَنًا، قَدْ قَدِرْتَنِي النَّاسُ. قَالَ فَمَسَحَهُ، فَذَهَبَ عَنْهُ، فَأُعْطِيَ لَوْنًا حَسَنًا وَجِلْدًا حَسَنًا....." <sup>17</sup>

“Narrated Abu Huraira: that he heard Allah's Messenger (pbuh) saying, "Allah willed to test three Israelis who were a Leper, a blind man and a bald-headed man. So, he sent them an angel who came to the leper and said, 'What thing do you like most?' He replied, 'Good color and good skin, for the people have a strong aversion to me.' The angel touched him and his illness was cured, and he was given a good color and beautiful skin..."

Many important researches have been made by the physicians of Islam about the leprosy disease. Furthermore, the description regarding the medical of leprosy disease in Arabic was transferred to the middle Europe. It was the ground for the understanding of the Westerns regarding disease till the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As leprosy disease is considered the disease of mortality, the one who is leper, suffering from the leprosy disease is limited in the obligation, and duties. Including the bankrupt, slave, minor, and insane. There comes in a hadith that:

حَدَّثَنَا رَجُلٌ، مِنْ آلِ الشَّرِيدِ يُقَالُ لَهُ عَمْرُو عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ كَانَ فِي وَفْدٍ ثَقِيفٍ رَجُلٌ مَجْدُومٌ فَأَرْسَلَ إِلَيْهِ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ  
"أَرْجِعْ فَقَدْ بَايَعْنَاكَ." <sup>18</sup>

It was narrated from a man from the family of *Sharid* whose name was *Amr* that his father said: “there was a leper among the delegation of *Thaqif*. The Prophet (pbuh) sent word to him: “Go back, for we have accepted your oath of allegiance.”

The status of leper is like that of the one who is suffering from the mental disease such as in the case of divorce and marriage.<sup>19</sup> If a man is suffering from the disease of leprosy than he should prevent from mating with his slave.<sup>20</sup> Reference with respect to the lepers early in chronicles appears due to conquests of *Arab*. *Al-Baladhuri* narrates that Hazrat *Umar (R.A)* the caliph has travelled to *Syria* in the year 639 A.D. When the army of Muslims towards *Al-Jabiyah* retreated due to the epidemic which broke out of *Amwas* plague. When he went to *Al-Jabiyah*, Hazrat *Umar (R.A)* encounter a colony of the lepers of Christians in grief. Provisions were made by him about their feeding and supporting them. Such a small incident signifies the presence of separate groups of those who are lepers in the region of Palestine.<sup>21</sup> In order to prevent any form of outbreak, because leprosy disease is infectious.

The government treasury, known as *bail-ul-mal*, was operational throughout the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) but was legally created under the reign of *Hazrat Umar (R.A)*. The money raised from taxes was used to support the underprivileged, ill, disabled, widows, old people, and orphans; it was also used to supply food in the event of a famine or natural disaster. The conclusion of this section of the debate notes that Islamic literary traditions never considered the spread of infectious illnesses to be a curse or a kind of retribution.<sup>22</sup> *Al-Jahiz* have also discussed about *bursa*, those

individuals who are afflicted with *Baras*, in his view, between *Arabs*, the infirmity was spread widely. It has struck women and men of all groups.<sup>23</sup> There comes in the hadith that Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) said:

قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ " لَا عَدْوَى... وَفِرَّ مِنَ الْمُجْدُومِ كَمَا تَفِرُّ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ".<sup>24</sup>

It has been narrated by Abu Hurairah, that Prophet (pbuh) said, “There is no Adwa (no contagious disease is conveyed without Allah’s permission).....and one should run away from the leper, as one runs away from the lion”.

At another place there comes:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ " لَا يُورِدُ الْمُمْرِضَ عَلَى الْمُسِيحِ ".<sup>25</sup>

It was narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: “A man with sick camels should not let them graze or drink alongside healthy ones.”

The Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) commended this because he knew that it is that disease which is contagious and it can be transferred to another person as well. So, healthy individuals should not come closer to the lepers.<sup>26</sup> The two religious customs seem to address the moral and health issues raised by the leper and are guidelines for societal action. Because the illness was offensive both physically and morally, the traditions may have reinforced the desire of many Muslims to stay away from people who were obviously sick.<sup>27</sup> There comes in a hadith that:

حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ " لَا تُدِيمُوا النَّظَرَ إِلَى الْمُجْدُومِينَ ".<sup>28</sup>

It was narrated from Ibn Abbas that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), “Do not keep looking at those who have leprosy”.

Leprosy disease also affects the well-being of an individual psychologically, economic, physical and social.<sup>29</sup> This edge serves as another foundational principle that guides the development of control and prevention strategies for infectious illnesses spread by avoiding crowds, isolating oneself, and rigorously adhering to social distance are these strategies. In the preceding hadith, Allah Almighty also demonstrated to medical professionals how to regulate and stop the spread of leprosy disease, including avoiding contact with untreated leprosy disease patients and those who have other contagious diseases.<sup>30</sup> Leprosy disease patients that are left untreated release a large number of organisms into the environment through their nasal mucosa. Upon inhalation, the organism proliferates on the inferior turbinate and undergoes a brief bacteraemia phase prior to attaching itself to Schwann cells and macrophages.<sup>31</sup> It is clear that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) meant to alert us to the need to take the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of leprosy disease (also known as Hansen's disease) from a leper. The implications of this dictum are evident in the indications that Allah Almighty has provided to medical professionals in the contemporary day.<sup>32</sup>

A famous example is found of *Ata ibn Abi Rabbah*, who was born in 647 CE and died in 732 CE was also disabled physically and was paralyzed. The history acknowledged him as renowned *mufti* at the time of his reign in city *Mecca*.<sup>33</sup> Caliph Abd al-Aziz, despite suffering from lion-sickness, remained a capable ruler for 20 years. Despite receiving numerous medications, he moved to *Hulwan* due to sulphurous springs and built his residence. Prophet Muhammad's hadith literature influenced societal perceptions of the illness, influencing subsequent generations' social behaviour.<sup>34</sup> The philosopher named *Abdul-Barakat al Baghdadi* whose death also took place due to *judham* in the year 560 A.D.<sup>35</sup> During the era of Islam, the development of leprosaria took place and the lepers were designated the quarters. Such quarters were used to present outside the city wall, mainly with the cemeteries of leper in conjunction. First hospital for Muslim was built in North side of Africa in *Al-Qayrawan* which is *Ifriqiyah*'s capital in the year 830 A.D. It was also called the hospital of *Dimnah*. In its close proximity, a building is situated which was separate, is known as *Dar al-Judhamam*. It is also called the leper's house. Their attention is given to the lepers medically.<sup>36</sup> It was the responsibility of the leper's leader that those who are suffering from the leprosy disease leprosy; they should be made free to leave that region. So, they live in the quarter of leper.

Large number of lepers used to live near the lake named as cabanas.<sup>37</sup> The name of the hospital of Muslim in Damascus is *hawsh al-qa'atilah*. Those inhabitants when get educated they call the latter disease known as *judham*. The terminology named *Jami-al-qa'atilah* due to the fact was described as mosque is said to be a building which is complex in structure. It consists of a minaret and separate quarters for the lepers who are transient. Since, from the time of medieval to the modern, leprosy disease is the common disease. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, leprosy disease, syphilis, along with elephantiasis occurred in villages of Egypt frequently.<sup>38</sup>

There is an example which is cited by *Hazrat Umar Ibn al- Khattab* narrated that he saw a woman who had a leprosy disease and was performing around the *Kaaba* a circumambulation ritually in *Mecca*.<sup>39</sup> And the women were told by *Umar (R.A)* that she should not come out of her home but remain there. *Hazrat Umar (R.A)* had not forced that woman who had leprosy disease to leave the sacred place *Kaaba*. But he instead treated her gently that she should return to home.<sup>40</sup>

In some of the example shown that a famous Muslim named *Mu'ayqib* who had leprosy disease. For his faith, he was persecuted unless from *Meccan* city. He had managed for escape and he migrated towards *Abyssinia*. But later on in *Medina* when Muslims had built a community, *Mu'ayqib* returned back. Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) had made *Mu'ayqib* as custodian of official place, and after the demise of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) he continued with doing this responsibility. *Hazrat Umar (R.A)* while he sat with *Mu'ayqib* he also ate from the plate which they both shared.<sup>41</sup>

Researchers have shown that leprosy disease is prevailing much in those who are very much poor. In a revolution which was toppled by the dynasty of *Umayyad*, there was a man named *Abu Muslim* who belongs from *Khorasan* and *Abu Hammad al-Marwazi*



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was a bearer of flag had leprosy disease. He had leprosy disease and was famous for its eloquence, chivalry and a beard was long.<sup>42</sup> During Umayyad, famous Muslim poets *Mughira ibn Amr al-Abras* and *Shabib ibn al-Barsa* were affected by leprosy disease. Abbasid, also known as *Ali ibn Abd-Allah ibn Sayf*, had large patches of leprosy on his back covered with his beard. A chief from *Bani Rizam* also had leprosy-suffering calves.<sup>43</sup> There were large numbers of North Africans when they are living at cities of middle size. The presence of those suffering from leprosy disease is a cause for those living near the quarters that were closely located.<sup>44</sup> In Islamic culture, the leper was not seen to have suffered from an absolute evil, the "disease of the soul," which meant a living death that was both civil and religious and that completely cut him off from his society and faith.<sup>45</sup>

#### **4. Establishment of *Bimaristans* for lepers in Islamic History**

The first Muslim who established *bimaristan* was a caliph named *Al-Walid* of Umayyad period in the year 707 AD in Damascus. In the period of Abbasid, a leprosarium was set up by *Al-Walid* in such a way that provides facilities to the lepers, crippled, lame, and blind. According to other scholars, the credit for the establishment of first *bimaristan* goes to *Yahiya ibn Khalid ibn Barmak* who was an Abbasid and was famous for his kindness, buildings and supports which he given to the culture of Persia. According to the scholars of Islam, Leo Africanus, two hundred houses were assigned to those people who had leprosy a quarter of Fez, in Morocco.<sup>46</sup> In the 18th and 19th centuries, Turks built leprosaria communities in the Middle East, treating non-severe cases at home. This practice was prevalent in Islam due to family responsibility, especially for females. Lepers enjoyed freedom of mobility, even living in asylums, and the poor's needs were the main focus of *bimaristan*, despite the development of hospitals in the Middle East.<sup>47</sup>

#### **5. Leprosy Disease in Pakistan**

The leprosy disease is studied in the communities of Muslim in those countries which are dominant Islamically such as Bangladesh, Iran, Pakistan and Indonesia. In Pakistan, according to one study it has been seen the culture of people with those having leprosy disease. One of the finding had revealed that one hundred and twenty eight patients were interviewed and among those lepers who with treatment not comply they denied having leprosy disease even.<sup>48</sup> Family role is seen in the case of leprosy disease patients when they are not treated properly and the poverty and pervasive attitude is there and illiteracy are the faults in Pakistan.<sup>49</sup> Leprosy disease, a persistent skin and peripheral nerve infection, primarily affects lower socioeconomic groups. The WHO has recognized its marginalized group as a neglected tropical disease and added it to its list.<sup>50</sup> When a group of committed nuns began treating leprosy disease patients at a leper colony in Karachi, Pakistan, in 1956, the seeds of the Leprosy disease Programme in Pakistan were sown, and the crop was harvested in 1996 when leprosy disease was brought under control in Pakistan.<sup>51</sup> Pakistan's Provincial Health Services utilize leprosy disease control methods, with the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre (MALC) being the largest NGOs. The country has 11 leprosy disease hospitals and 104 leprosy disease field units, with 2885 admissions in 1995. Cases primarily originate from

Hyderabad/Sindh and Karachi.<sup>52</sup> Leprosy cases decreased to 377 in 2022 from 551 in 2005, representing 0.2% of global cases. Pakistan's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aims to enter the upper-middle class by 2030, collaborating with other countries to combat diseases and develop innovative non-traditional technologies.<sup>53</sup> There is no one better to research social advancement and innovation in Pakistan than the late Dr. Ruth Pfau called as Mother Teresa of Pakistan. Who played a key role in controlling the spread of leprosy disease.<sup>54</sup>

Dr. Ruth Pfau's journey began with a personal tragedy when she lost her brother at nine years old during World War II. This tragedy inspired her to pursue a career in medicine. She joined the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and later visited a leprosy disease colony in Karachi. This experience influenced her to become a doctor and help patients with severe illnesses.<sup>55</sup> There was no physician in Pakistan who specialised in treating leprosy disease when Dr. Ruth Pfau arrived. She then travelled to Madras, India. Medical professionals in Madras had more expertise with leprosy disease; since, the city had a higher leprosy disease patient rate. She spent a few weeks there, had therapy, and then returned to Pakistan.<sup>56</sup> She arrived in Pakistan in 1960, during a time when leprosy disease patients had no treatment options and were thought to have an incurable illness. Regarding any prospective cure or therapy for these sick, people were disregarded. In one of her interviews, Dr. Ruth Pfau stated, "Leprosy disease has been treated since 1942." However, we in Pakistan were unaware of it. There comes in a hadith that:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ. رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ " مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ دَاءً إِلَّا أَنْزَلَ لَهُ شِفَاءً. " <sup>57</sup>

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (pbuh) said, "There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment."

At another place there comes:

قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَ شِفَاءً-وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَ هُوَ عَلَىٰ عَنُقِ أُولَٰئِكَ يُنَادُونَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ. <sup>58</sup>

“Say: "It is for those who believe, a guide and a healing. And as for those who disbelieve, there is heaviness (deafness) in their ears, and it (the Quran) is blindness for them. They are those who are called from a place far away (so they neither listen nor understand)”.<sup>59</sup>

Islamic medicine appears to have maintained the more scientific and humanitarian approach to treating the illness, as seen by the physicians' refusal to recommend seclusion or fleeing from a leper, as well as by their descriptions of the condition that did not morally censure those who were afflicted.<sup>60</sup> Muslims' ambivalence about lepers resulted from differing views on the disease; there was not a single, shared understanding of the illness that would have guided societal behaviour.<sup>61</sup> But it is required that the patient must remain patient while suffering from any disease. Allah Almighty says in Quran:

وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ-<sup>62</sup>

“And when I am ill, it is He who cures me”.<sup>63</sup>

Dr. Ruth Pfau constructed a temporary facility to care for leprosy disease patients with the assistance of other missionaries. She didn't hold out for help from the government. Instead, she made the decision to work alone and had a modest beginning. Since, it was not possible to create a hospital at the time; Dr. Ruth Pfau, with her fellow sister began in a hut. The treatment for leprosy disease began abruptly.<sup>64</sup> Dr. Ruth Pfau, a pioneer in leprosy disease treatment, received support from the Pakistani government and German funding organizations. She established the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre, which has since grown to represent hope for those in need. The Pakistani government supported her efforts, and the World Health Organisation recognized Pakistan as the first Asian nation to successfully control leprosy disease in 1996. Pfau's contributions significantly changed how individuals were perceived.<sup>65</sup>

Currently, control initiatives are in place throughout Pakistan, with 40 field clinics spread throughout several regions and 7 sub centres located in Karachi. With the assistance of voluntary agencies, federal and provincial governments, and the people of Afghanistan, leprosy disease control units have been built in every province of Pakistan, including the northern regions and the region of Azad Kashmir. There are now 85 Control Units of Leprosy disease around the nation.<sup>66</sup> The Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre (MALC) in Karachi, Pakistan, was established in 1963 as the national hub for controlling leprosy. Under Dr. Ruth Pfau, it serves the majority of leprosy patients in the region, making Pakistan the first in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region. The centre also serves as a hub for financing, data gathering, and staff training.<sup>67</sup> Controlling leprosy disease requires treating and rehabilitating every patient, as the bacterium can live in a latent form for up to 30 years. Continual attention and training are necessary for eradicating the disease. A sustainable plan must be varied across communities, using existing skills or minimal retraining. Dr. Pfau has gained recognition for her collaboration with the Pakistani government.<sup>68</sup>

### Analysis

The two skeletal evidence from 500 AD indicate that leprosy disease dates back in historical and archaeological records. It is the illness that has afflicted every person on the planet. Mycobacterium leprae is the microorganism responsible for the leprosy disease illness. This bacterium can remain in the body for up to thirty years. The disease's nature makes it easily transmissible to other people. When a person with the condition breaths in an open space, air droplets carry it to others. When an affected person used to cough and sneeze in front of other people, it also impacted other people. The bacterium that causes leprosy disease affects the mouth, nose, skin, eyes, and peripheral nerves. It impairs the afflicted person's immune system. It has a detrimental effect on the bones, causing them to change, become misshapen, and destructive. When a person with the condition has changes in their bones, such as those in the cranial area that impact the face and mouth, the skeleton is severely impacted in addition to the post-cranial area, which has an impact on an entire body. Leprosy disease, a deadly

form, affects various parts of the body, including skin, hair, and brows. Borderline leprosy causes macules, papules, and plaques, while lepromatous affects the nose and face, causing edoema and nerve damage. Tubercloid leprosy weakens muscles, causes numbness, blisters, and ulcers, and impacts physical, mental, social, psychological, and financial well-being.

The Quran mentions Jesus' ability to heal lepers during the early days of Islam. A Pharaoh's infant, Hazrat Eisa, was miraculously healed from leprosy after swimming in the Nile River. This serves as a reminder of the blessings bestowed upon Hazrat Eisa and his mother, including learning writing and the Torah, and the ability to cure diseases without medication. There were many famous personalities in Islam who were affected with the disease of leprosy disease. Among them are *Jadhimah al-Abrash* or *Al-Waddah* who was the king of *Hirah* was the first person who suffered the disease. Likewise the two famous poets of Islam were also suffered named *Abid ibn al-Abras* and secondly, *Al-Harith ibn Hillizah al-Yashkuri*. Furthermore, *Ata ibn Abi Rabbah*, who was a renowned *mufti* at the time of his reign in city *Mecca* got affected with leprosy disease. Similarly, *Caliph Abd al-Aziz* and *Abdul Barakat al-Baghdadi*, *Mua'yyiqib*, *Abu Hammad al-Marwazi*, *Mughira ibn Amr al-Abras*, *Shabib ibn al-Barsa*, and *Ali ibn Abd-Allah ibn Sayf* and many others are affected in different periods in Islamic history such as in the time of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh), in the reign of *Hazrat Umar (R.A)*, Umayyid dynasty, Abbasid dynasty. *Hazrat Umar (R.A.)* visited a colony of lepers in Palestine and provided assistance and nourishment. During Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) lifetime, the government treasury, *bail-ul-mal*, was in place to provide food during natural calamities or famines. Leprosy patients had limited obligations due to its terminal nature. Muslims believed in maintaining social distance, avoiding crowds, and isolating themselves to avoid contact with unwell individuals.

*Al-Walid*, a *caliph* of the Umayyad era, founded *bimaristan* as the first Muslim state in 707 A.D near Damascus. *Al-Walid* established a leprosarium during the Abbasid era, catering to the needs of the blind, disabled, and lepers. The Abbasid *Yahiya Ibn Khalid ibn Barmak* is credited with founding the first *bimaristan* at 830 A.D., the first Muslim hospital was constructed at *Al-Qayrawan*, the capital of *Ifriqiyah*, on the continent of Africa. It was also referred to as *Dimnah's Hospital*. In close vicinity, there used to be a distinct building called *Dar al-Judhamam*. The Muslim hospital in *Damascus* is called *Hawsh al-Qa'atilah*. The illness is under control in Pakistan. Owing to the work of Dr. Ruth Pfau and her associates, since she devoted her entire life to treating leprosy disease sufferers. In Karachi, Pakistan, Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre (MALC) is made for curing leprosy disease patient. The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that Pakistan is recognised as leading Asia in leprosy disease treatment, control, and cure. Leprosy disease patients used to travel from all over the world to receive treatment.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes, that leprosy disease is a very serious disease which is transmissible. At different periods in Islam it had struck various individuals. Initiatives were taken in the past in Islamic history for those who suffers from leprosy disease. In the past *bimaristans* were made for those who were affected due to leprosy disease. On the other hand, hospitals are also made for lepers patients all around the globe. It affects the individual psychologically, socially, emotionally. The individuals are not able to carry out their duties. They are segregated from the society of healthy individuals. *Hazrat Eisa (A.S)* was blessed from Allah Almighty in curing individuals who were blind and leprosy disease. Later on as time passes by its medicine has been made for curing the patient. Now the disease is controlled as compared to the past. And is most under control in Pakistan. Due to the efforts of Dr. Ruth Pfau who had served in treatment of leprosy disease patients. People all around the globe came for their treatment to Dr. Ruth Pfau. Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre (MALC) is established for treating leprosy disease patients.

So, individuals must know that for any disease, especially which is contagious such as leprosy disease must know that what measures should be adopted for controlling the spread of disease in order to avoid the spread of the disease. The disease should be treated immediately at its initial stage otherwise it may proves fatal. As it causes mortality. Direction and guidance must be taken from the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh). Like the people use to take in the past treat and keep themselves of isolated from the individuals who are healthy. So, preventive measures were also adopted for curing the disease in the past. As they are not time bound or limited. The affected individuals must take care of the rest of the humanity and remain patience and does not produce tales or fake stories that it is the punishment from Allah Almighty. Rather, the disease which inflicts an individual is from Allah Almighty. Lastly, Allah Almighty has not made any disease for which there is no cure. And Quran is the healing for the affected ones.



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