

CRITICAL INVESTIGATION ON THE PANDEMIC FROM THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Since the emergence of the global challenges of COVID-19 pandemic, its impact could be widely viewed in various human society aspects, such as education, business trading and also social interaction limit. Apart from many discussions on the pandemic from a wide range of such perspectives, scholarly attention is still rarely mainly in trying to elaborate the critical overview from an Islamic perspective following theological, historical, and sociological points of view. In this paper, the critical elaboration of the pandemic has been widely discussed by analysing the contents of sacred scriptures and responses from an Islamic point of view. The literature was critically conducted from religious sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith, and also related contemporary works. The finding reveals that

the pandemic has been given full attention as stated in the Qur'ān and narrated in Ḥadīth by taking a lesson from pandemics and strategically battling the pandemic. The following attentions were addressed in order to strengthen the Muslim community and society in order to support the health protocols arranged by the local and international health organizations. The value is that religion's clear comprehension could give continued support to encourage the Muslim community especially and general society at large in the attempts to battle the spreading pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19; pandemic; religiosity; religious perspective; health protocols; Muslim society.

Khulasah

Penularan wabak COVID-19 di peringkat global telah memberikan implikasi yang besar terhadap kehidupan manusia, khususnya dalam konteks pendidikan, perdagangan, perniagaan dan interaksi sosial. Meskipun banyak perspektif perbincangan mengenai pandemik, penelitian ilmiah secara kritikal menurut perspektif Islam masih kurang diberikan perhatian, khususnya dalam konteks teologi, sejarah dan sosiologi. Maka bertitik tolak dari hal ini, artikel ini membincangkan isu pandemik secara kritis dalam perspektif Islam. Pembinaan sorotan literatur secara kritikal dibuat berpandukan kepada sumber-sumber agama seperti al-Qur'ān, Ḥadīth serta karya kontemporari. Kajian mendapati bahawa isu pandemik sememangnya telah diberikan perhatian secara menyeluruh dalam Islam sebagaimana terkandung dalam al-Qur'ān serta Ḥadīth – berpandukan kepada iktibar terdahulu semasa mendepani pandemik. Kajian ini menyarankan supaya diperkukuhkan kesatuan komuniti Muslim dan masyarakat awam dalam menyokong protokol kesihatan yang disarankan oleh pihak berkuasa

kesihatan tempatan dan antarabangsa. Kajian ini membuktikan bahawa dengan kefahaman agama yang benar dalam isu pandemik menyumbang kepada sokongan yang berterusan dalam kalangan komuniti Muslim serta masyarakat awam dalam mendepani penularan pandemik.

Kata kunci: COVID-19; pandemik; keagamaan; perspektif agama; protokol kesihatan; masyarakat Muslim.

Introduction

In recent years, the outbreak of the pandemic has given a tremendous impact with the obvious destruction and risks to the world society at large. The dramatic process of spreading the pandemic virus led to unprecedented challenges to society, including health issues, education system and also economic sector. With this regard, the clear disruption of the pandemic has given a serious concern to force human life activities into the new normal, where preventive action should be properly empowered in ensuring control of the pandemic spread more widely. As a result, the number of initiatives in order to provide the potentials of solving the pandemic has been widely transformed into regulated norms in controlling human life with new styles and approaches, such as in the education sector,¹ environment,² consumerism³ and

¹ Al Lily, A. E., Ismail, A. F., Abunasser, F. M. & Alqahtani, R. H. A., "Distance Education as a Response to Pandemics: Coronavirus and Arab Culture," *Technology in Society* 63(2020), 1.

² Tokazhanov, G., Tleuken, A., Guney, M., Turkyilmaz, A. & Karaca, F., "How is COVID-19 Experience Transforming Sustainability Requirements of Residential Buildings? A Review," *Sustainability* 12(20) 2020, 1.

³ Kumar, R. & Abdin, M. S., "Impact of Epidemics and Pandemics on Consumption Pattern: Evidence from Covid-19 Pandemic in Rural-urban India," *Asian Journal of Economics and Banking (AJEB)*, (2021), 2.

economy⁴. The strategic approach to solving the pandemic issues is widely expanded mainly on the obviously seeming matters such as social distancing arrangement followed by the mask wearing procedure.

In addition, the practice of what to do in line with the pandemic issues comes to expand the real solution throughout the food supply chain management capacity⁵, public health assurance⁶, hospitality service⁷, work sustainability⁸, financial regularity and security⁹. Moreover, the following approaches as initiated by the state and local authorities should also be managed properly in ensuring all the support and prevention could go smoothly. As a result, the factor of awareness played a significant role in assisting the adherence scale and level towards the protocol and regulations for the prevention initiative. Referring to the awareness aspect, one of the

⁴ Farooq, M. U., Hussain, A., Masood, T. & Habib, M. S., "Supply Chain Operations Management in Pandemics: A State-of-the-Art Review Inspired by COVID-19," *Sustainability* 13(5) (2021), 1-2.

⁵ Marusak, A., Sadeghiamirshahidi, N., Krejci, C. C., Mittal, A., Beckwith, S., Cantu, J. & Grimm, J., "Resilient Regional Food Supply Chains and Rethinking the Way Forward: Key Takeaways From the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Agricultural Systems* 190 (2021), 1.

⁶ Hotez, P. J., Batista, C., Amor, Y. B., Ergonul, O., Figueroa, J. P., Gilbert, S. & Bottazzi, M. E., "Global Public Health Security and Justice for Vaccines and Therapeutics in the COVID-19 Pandemic," *E-Clinical Medicine* 39 (2021), 1-2.

⁷ Hu, F., Teichert, T., Deng, S., Liu, Y. & Zhou, G. "Dealing with Pandemics: An Investigation of the Effects of COVID-19 on Customers' Evaluations of Hospitality Services," *Tourism Management* 85 (2021), 1.

⁸ Farooq, M. U., Hussain, A., Masood, T. & Habib, M. S., "Supply Chain Operations Management in Pandemics: A State-of-the-Art Review Inspired by COVID-19," *Sustainability* 13(5) (2021), 4.

⁹ Tleuken, A., Tokazhanov, G., Guney, M., Turkyilmaz, A. & Karaca, F., "Readiness Assessment of Green Building Certification Systems for Residential Buildings During Pandemics," *Sustainability* 13(2) (2021), 1.

most potential values to give sufficient encouragement to adhere such norms is through the spirituality as the inner pathway of human life. The spiritual substance is potentially assisting the human dimension in following the rules and regulations in the sense that safety and health are the ones to further maintain in order to continue the spiritual process with a wise approach.

In line with continuing spiritual stability in the process of adhering to the protocols, the balance of having the effort between the seen substance and the unseen one should be taken into consideration in a particular way. The essential enhancement to have sufficient adherence to ensure the accessibility and continuity of preventive action through the rules and protocols is required to strengthen the reflective encouragement from the religion's perspective. There are many studies carried out by scholars in addressing the particular issue of the pandemic from the religion's point of view as from the Islamic perspective,¹⁰ theoretically¹¹ and practically. The crucial point with continuous prospects to contribute in advancing the inner stability from knowledge comprehension followed by the actual reflection to help manage the adherence of protocols is significant to address the human dimension towards the pandemic crisis. As a result, the purposeful attempts to advance the inner action in human life come from the integrated dimension from the inside and outside-based intervention.¹² The essential value to

¹⁰ Hilmy, M. & Niam, K., "Winning the Battle of Authorities: The Muslim Disputes Over the Covid-19 Pandemic Plague in Contemporary Indonesia," *QIJS: Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 8(2) (2020), 294.

¹¹ Ramle, M. R. & Mohamad, M. Y., "Analysis Hadith al-Ṭurāyya dan Kaitannya dengan COVID-19," *Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 18(2) (2020), 178.

¹² Izumi, T., Sukhwani, V., Surjan, A. & Shaw, R., "Managing and Responding to Pandemics in Higher Educational Institutions: Initial

governing self-development in managing inner stability is required to have significant knowledge detail about the real meaning and reflecting point of the pandemic. Such contribution could be translated into ensuring the access to the comprehension pathway followed by the crucial value in assisting to solve the pandemic crisis amidst the human dimension.

It is clear that the potential of the main point of such initiative is required to further elaborate the particular issues not only from the physical aspect, where all seen could be managed in a proper way but also the unseen aspects, like the inner part of human society. In terms of addressing the way on what to reflect towards such pandemic issues, both spirituality and religiosity mediation in underlying the solving practices should be expanded to enable believers to have a sufficient comprehension to take a lesson for each situation including the outbreak. In this paper, the critical elaboration of the pandemic will be discussed by analysing the contents of sacred scriptures and responses from an Islamic point of view.

The literature was critically conducted from religious sources such as the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, and also related contemporary works, where such this will be taken as a reflection on the current issues. The main focus as the essential outcome of reflecting the pandemic from the religion's point of view is addressed to give full attention as stated in the Qur'ān and narrated in Ḥadīth. The following finding as the main outcome is advanced to strengthen the Muslim community and society to support the health protocols arranged by the local and international health organizations. The main value of this paper aims to

Learning from COVID-19", *International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment* 12(1) (2021), 55.

look into detail about the religion's clear comprehension in giving continued support to encourage the Muslim community especially and general society at large in the attempts to battle the spreading pandemic.

Overview of the Pandemics Crisis

Based on the etymological perspective, the pandemic originates from the words in Greek, namely 'πᾶν' (pan) that means 'all', and 'δῆμος' (demos) that means 'local people' or 'the crowd'.¹³ Moreover, its definition could be comprehended as an outbreak of an infectious illness spreading within a population in several continents or worldwide. In particular, the clear overview in today's world context has given a variety of norms of pandemics such as smallpox and tuberculosis. One of the examples is the Black Death, also known as the plague, the deadliest pandemic recorded in history, killing an estimated 75–200 million people in the 14th century¹⁴. Moreover, the term "pandemic" was not used until later in 1918 during the influenza pandemic, Spanish flu, and now refers to SARS-CoV-2 outbreak, later known as COVID-19. According to Morens et al.,¹⁵ the terms epidemic and pandemic were used vaguely and interchangeably in various social and medical contexts in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Based on the studies by Yuan et al.,¹⁶ and El-Aziza & Stockand,¹⁷ the novel coronavirus was first detected on

¹³ *Collins English Dictionary*, "Pandemic", accessed Feb 27, 2021, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/pandemic>.

¹⁴ Littman, Robert J., "The Plague of Athens: Epidemiology and Paleopathology," *Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine: A Journal of Translational and Personalized Medicine* 76(5) (2009), 456.

¹⁵ Morens, David M., Gregory K. Folkers & Anthony S. Fauci, "What Is a Pandemic?" *Journal of Infectious Diseases* 200(7) (2009), 1018.

¹⁶ Yuan, J., Lu, Y., Cao, X. & Cui, H., "Regulating Wildlife Conservation and Food Safety to Prevent Human Exposure to Novel Virus," *Ecosystem Health and Sustainability* 6(1) (2020), 1.

¹⁷ El-Aziza, Tarek Mohamed Abd & James D. Stockand, "Infection, Genetics and Evolution Recent Progress and Challenges in Drug

31 December 2019 in Wuhan, China, causing severe respiratory problems such as bronchitis, pneumonia, and possibly gastroenteritis, respiratory, enteric, renal, and neurological diseases.¹⁸ According to medical reports, the pandemic was caused by exotic animals, particularly bats sold at markets in Wuhan, China.¹⁹ Furthermore, the recently reported coronavirus is associated with a previous viral strain, which caused severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in Guangdong at the end of 2002 and the middle eastern respiratory system (MERS) in Saudi Arabia in 2012.²⁰ These infectious viruses pose a serious threat to human life, prompting the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare a World Public Health Emergency in March 2020.²¹ As of 28 September 2021, WHO reported 231,703,120 COVID-19 confirmed cases

Development against COVID-19 Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2): An Update on the Status," *Infection, Genetics and Evolution*, 83(April) (2020), 1.

¹⁸ Ou, X., Liu, Y., Lei, X. et al. "Characterization of Spike Glycoprotein of SARS-CoV-2 on Virus Entry and its Immune Cross-Reactivity with SARS-CoV," *Nature Communications* 11(1620) (2020), 1-2.

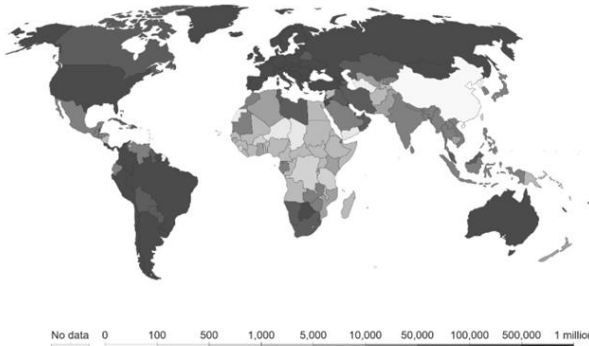
¹⁹ Zhang, Y. & Ma, Z. F., "Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental Health and Quality of Life Among Local Residents in Liaoning Province, China: A Cross-Sectional Study," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17(7) (2020), 1.

²⁰ El-Aziza, Tarek Mohamed Abd & James D. Stockand, "Infection, Genetics and Evolution Recent Progress and Challenges in Drug Development against COVID-19 Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2): An Update on the Status," *Infection, Genetics and Evolution*, 83(April) (2020), 1.

²¹ Yuan, J., Lu, Y., Cao, X. & Cui, H., "Regulating Wildlife Conservation and Food Safety to Prevent Human Exposure to Novel Virus," *Ecosystem Health and Sustainability* 6(1) (2020), 1.

in 222 countries (Figure 1)²², including 4,746,620 deaths (Table 1)²³.

Figure 1: Global map confirm COVID-19 cases per million people (February 22nd, 2022)



Sources: John Hopkins University (2022)

Table 1: The countries with the highest COVID-19 cases and deaths (February 24th, 2022)

| Country | Cases | Deaths | Country | Cases | Deaths |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| USA | 80,366,783 | 966,399 | Argentina | 8,868,188 | 125,775 |
| India | 42,880,507 | 512,954 | Iran | 6,998,975 | 135,726 |
| Brazil | 28,487,694 | 646,679 | Netherlands | 6,193,776 | 21,518 |
| France | 22,468,2 | 137,48 | Colombia | 6,054,3 | 138,36 |

²² John Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data, accessed September 28, 2021, <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>.

²³ World Health Organization, "WHO-COVID-19-Statistics," accessed September 28, 2021, <https://covid19.who.int/>.

| | | | | | |
|---------|------------|---------|--------------|-----------|---------|
| | 39 | 9 | | 07 | 4 |
| UK | 18,734,683 | 160,979 | Poland | 5,602,680 | 110,517 |
| Russia | 15,795,570 | 347,816 | Mexico | 5,436,566 | 316,492 |
| Germany | 14,092,621 | 122,622 | Indonesia | 5,350,902 | 147,025 |
| Turkey | 13,762,181 | 93,258 | Ukraine | 4,783,835 | 105,229 |
| Italy | 12,603,758 | 153,764 | Japan | 4,607,741 | 22,285 |
| Spain | 10,914,105 | 98,936 | South Africa | 3,665,149 | 98,978 |

Source: WHO-COVID-19-Statistics (2022)

Meanwhile, 5,924,819,985 vaccine doses were administered as of 27 September 2021.²⁴ In respect of the Muslim-majority countries (Table 2)²⁵, only four countries are recently included in the top 20 global list of countries with the highest COVID-19 cases and deaths (Table 1)²⁶, namely Turkey, Iran, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Table 2: The countries with a majority Muslim population with the highest COVID-19 cases and deaths (February 24th, 2022)

| Country | Cases | Deaths | Country | Cases | Deaths |
|-----------|------------|---------|--------------|-----------|--------|
| Turkey | 13,762,181 | 93,258 | Morocco | 1,159,941 | 15,938 |
| Iran | 6,998,975 | 135,726 | UAE | 876,624 | 2,298 |
| Indonesia | 5,350,902 | 147,025 | Azerbaijan | 779,783 | 9,307 |
| Malaysia | 3,305,157 | 32,488 | Saudi Arabia | 741,864 | 8,990 |
| Iraq | 2,296,665 | 24,917 | Kuwait | 616,409 | 2,533 |

²⁴ World Health Organization, "WHO-COVID-19-Statistics," accessed September 28, 2021, <https://covid19.who.int/>.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

| | | | | | |
|------------|-----------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|
| Bangladesh | 1,938,135 | 28,995 | Palestine | 572,854 | 5,179 |
| Jordan | 1,599,422 | 13,751 | Bahrain | 501,643 | 1,444 |
| Pakistan | 1,503,873 | 30,096 | Libya | 489,940 | 6,222 |
| Kazakhstan | 1,300,164 | 13,553 | Egypt | 475,341 | 23,889 |

Source: WHO-COVID-19-Statistics (2022)

Subsequently, the number of cases and deaths has increased significantly due to mismanagement of public health and numerous factors in the countries, which are related to misleading information,²⁷ incorrect beliefs²⁸ as conspiracy theories²⁹ and incorrect practices³⁰ that cause poisoning and death.³¹ These factors are attributed to the lack of knowledge about the Islamic perspective regarding the pandemic.³²

The pandemic outbreak is becoming one of the reference points for many endeavours, concerns, and

²⁷ Nasir, N. M., Baequni, B. & Nurmansyah, M. I., "Misinformation Related to Covid-19 in Indonesia," *Jurnal Administrasi Kesehatan Indonesia* 8(2) (2020), 54.

²⁸ Yoosefi Lebni, J., Ziapour, A., Mehedi, N. & Irandoost, S. F., "The Role of Clerics in Confronting the Covid-19 Crisis in Iran," *Journal of Religion and Health* 60(2021), 2387.

²⁹ Bruns, A., Harrington, S. & Hurcombe, E., "Corona? 5G? or Both?: The Dynamics of COVID-19/5G Conspiracy Theories on Facebook," *Media International Australia* 177(1) (2020), 15.

³⁰ Rostami, M., "The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Alcohol Use Disorders in Iran," *American Journal of Men's Health* 14(4) (2020), 10.

³¹ Delirrad, M. & Mohammadi, A. B., "New Methanol Poisoning Outbreaks in Iran Following COVID-19 Pandemic," *Alcohol and Alcoholism* 55(4) (2020), 347.

³² Widiyanto, A., "Religion and Covid-19 in the Era of Post-Truth: The Case of Indonesia," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 18 (2020), 11.

social structures, including religion³³ when a disease outbreak or natural disaster takes place in the future.³⁴ A pandemic impacts not only human health – psychological-emotional but also impacts the social and economic³⁵ aspects of a country, including religion.³⁶ The day-to-day religious and spiritual practices have been the source of inner peace³⁷ amidst all the worldly chaos for many as they improve psychological health outcomes.³⁸ However, given that numerous restrictions have been imposed locally and internationally due to the pandemic, some believers disagree with the authorities regarding the gathering restrictions to contain the spread of the virus.

As remarked by Kowalczyk et al.,³⁹ spirituality is a relatively new aspect in healthcare, but it is becoming increasingly relevant. In recent years, research has shown

³³ Chester, D. K., Duncan, A. M. & Speake, J., "Earthquakes, Volcanoes and God: Comparative Perspectives from Christianity and Islam," *GeoHumanities* 5(2) (2019), 444.

³⁴ Gaillard, J. C. & P. Texier, "Religions, Natural Hazards and Disasters: An Introduction," *Religion* 40(2) (2010), 81.

³⁵ Al-Awadhi, A. M., Alsaifi, K., Al-Awadhi, A. & Alhammad, S., "Death and Contagious Infectious Diseases: Impact of the COVID-19 Virus on Stock Market Returns," *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Finance* 27 (2020), 1.

³⁶ Kowalczyk, O., Roszkowski, K., Montane, X., Pawliszak, W., Tylkowski, B. & Bajek, A., "Religion and Faith Perception in a Pandemic of COVID-19," *Journal of Religion and Health* 59 (2020), 2671.

³⁷ Counted, V., Pargament, K. I., Bechara, A. O., Joynt, S. & Cowden, R. G., "Hope and Well-Being in Vulnerable Contexts during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Does Religious Coping Matter?" *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 17(1) (2020), 70-71.

³⁸ Hajra B, Saleem T., "The Use of Islamic Patterned Art Therapy: Healing of Psychological Problems Among University Students," *Journal of Religion and Health* Dec 60(6) (2021), 4361.

³⁹ Kowalczyk, O., Roszkowski, K., Montane, X., Pawliszak, W., Tylkowski, B. & Bajek, A., "Religion and Faith Perception in a Pandemic of COVID-19," *Journal of Religion and Health* 59 (2020), 2671.

that religious values and practices are related to different facets of well-being, such as management of illnesses, rehabilitation after hospitalization, and a positive attitude in trying times.⁴⁰ As a result, the significance of spirituality in clinical practice has been gradually recognised.⁴¹ Spirituality is most commonly described in general terms as the quest for a 'higher meaning' related to God's faith or belief.⁴² Therefore, religion could help believers in understanding and overcome challenges associated with the pandemic. Pieterse & Landman⁴³ highlighted three emerging themes among religious followers concerning the pandemic: 1) it is an act of God; 2) it has nothing to do with God, or 3) God remains in control during a devastating pandemic.

In line with looking into Islamic history, several pandemics had been recorded by Muslim historians such as Ibn al-Athīr (1160-1233) in *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārikh*, al-Dhahabī (1274-1348) in *Siyār A'lām al-Nubalā'*, al-Suyūṭī (1445-1505) in *Tārikh al-Khulafā'*, Ibn Battuta (1304-1368) in *al-Riḥlah* and Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406) in *Muqaddimah*. Meanwhile, some Muslim works have discussed the pandemic in detail, such as *Badhl al-Ma'ūn fī Faḍl at-Ṭā'ūn* by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalanī (1372-1449),

⁴⁰ Albers, G., Ehteld, Michael A., De Vet, Henrica C.W., Onwuteaka-Philipsen, Bregje D., Van Der Linden, M. H. M. & Deliens, L., "Content and Spiritual Items of Quality-of-Life Instruments Appropriate for Use in Palliative Care: A Review," *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* (2010), 291.

⁴¹ Best, M., Butow, P. & Olver, I., "Do Patients Want Doctors to Talk about Spirituality? A Systematic Literature Review," *Patient Education and Counselling* 98(11) (2015), 1320.

⁴² Mishra, S. K., Togneri, E., Tripathi, B. & Trikamji, B., "Spirituality and Religiosity and Its Role in Health and Diseases," *Journal of Religion and Health* 56(2017), 1282.

⁴³ Pieterse, T. & Landman, C., "Religious Views on the Origin and Meaning of COVID-2019," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77(3) (2021), 1.

Ma Rawāh al-Wa'ūn fī Akhbār at-Ṭā'ūn by al-Suyūṭī (1445–1505), and *al-Maraḍ al-Wafid* by Ibn Khatimah al-Anṣārī (1323-1369), who also wrote at least three dozen works on the plague. Any kind of damage is caused by the human irresponsibility with greed and abuse to take an advantage on the earth, clearly stated in the two verses of the Qur'ān: "And whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned; but He pardons much",⁴⁴ and "Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]".⁴⁵ Contextualized to the present outbreak, it is the responsibility for every human to ensure the safety in our planet by taking the natural sources together with maintaining environmental sustainability.

With regards to the outbreak, the important point is to take a lesson that empowers human in general and Muslim in particular to battle this disaster by adhering to the religion's advice together with the medical instruction. On this view, the religion has advocated to maintain away from harm thing in order to take safety and avoid the spread to others which could make danger to others. Many references in the Prophetic Ḥadīth urged believers to avoid diseased areas and quarantine those infected with contagious disease. Nevertheless, the theological element cannot be avoided in discussing the pandemic, particularly in Islam. In the face of a pandemic or any natural disaster, people often turn to their respective religions for contextual expressions and answers as guidelines for responding to the situation.

⁴⁴ The Qur'ān, 42 :30.

⁴⁵ The Qur'ān, 30:41.

Materials and Methods

Through a qualitative study, the content analysis was determined and used to quantify the occurrence of certain words, phrases, subjects or concepts in a set of historical or contemporary texts, particularly from the fields of religious studies, anthropology, psychology and sociology.⁴⁶ The examination was made amongst several verses in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth scriptures, books, articles and Islamic religious authority guidelines related to the concepts and themes of pandemics. The terms in the Islamic texts related to the pandemic, such as plague (*al-wabā'*), disease (*al-maraḍ*), and healing (*al-shifā'*), were highlighted, and significant Islamic precautions were recommended in medical advice as travel bans, quarantine, and maintaining self-hygiene and vaccination were discussed.

Limitations

The scope of this research is limited to the Islamic perspective on the pandemic. Primary sources and mainstream Muslim perspectives were used to obtain and analyse the data. It is recommended for future research to focus on religious leaders' personal experiences during a pandemic. Furthermore, the current study focused primarily on Islamic viewpoints, which most Muslims acknowledge. A deeper understanding of the views of other religions is required to provide a more inclusive outlook on this matter. Since religions have different practices, the experiences of different religious communities may vary from one another. Even within one religion like Islam, some factors may contribute to variations in Muslim perspectives and motivation due to cultural and geographical differences, among other factors.

⁴⁶ White, M. D. & Marsh, E. E., "Content Analysis: A Flexible Methodology," *Library Trends* 55(1) (2006), 22.

Towards Islamic Concept of Pandemic

The Arabic word for plague (*ṭā'ūn*) comes from a word that means "to pierce" with a sharp tool or weapon, such as an arrow. The term is also used to indicate a condition in which a common sickness causes a large number of people to die, which explains its association with the term *wabā'*. While the term *ṭā'ūn* is normally reserved for the plague, the more generic term B is more commonly used to describe an epidemic, particularly one with a large-scale impact. These two names were, however, sometimes used interchangeably as synonyms.⁴⁷ In Islam, all types of germs (e.g., bacteria, protozoa, viruses and fungi) are God's creatures even though they can exist through human intermediaries or other beings⁴⁸. Gaining sufficient comprehension of the lesson from the pandemic is important to allow the society, particularly the Muslim society, to continue combatting the pandemic and maintaining safety. Three main perspectives in Islam regarding the pandemic have been identified in the Qur'an and Hadith.

Firstly, a pandemic is one of God's ways to punish or test humans who disobey His command, especially when they exploit nature. This test is also imposed on the believers who see this act as a blessing that reduces their sins. As narrated by 'Aisha, the wife of the Prophet, 'I asked Allah's Messenger (PBUH) about the plague. He told me that it was a punishment sent by Allah on whom he wished, and Allah made it a source of mercy for the

⁴⁷ Shabana, A., "From the Plague to the Coronavirus: Islamic Ethics and Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 5(2021), 1.

⁴⁸ Ahmad Faizuddin Ramli & Nusairah Ramli, "COVID-19 Pandemic from Religious Perspective: A Response from Islam and Christianity", in *A Global Pandemic: Ripple Effects of COVID-19*, eds. M. Ebrahimi & U. Aydemir (Kota Kinabalu: Penerbit Universiti Malaysia Sabah, 2022), 59.

believers...'.⁴⁹ This test refers to the distribution of lessons to ensure the continuation of good acts and prevention of harm to others, especially those with needs. Notably, it is important for the test to guide humans back to God by adhering to His instruction to save the planet.

Secondly, the pandemic could be occurred when the over stand of misuse which made cruelty and impact harmful and loss to others, such as corruption attempt, as stated in the Qur'ān 'and whatever strikes you of disaster - it is for what your hands have earned, but He pardons much'⁵⁰. Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373), in his commentary⁵¹, expends the context with the verse "And if Allah were to punish men for that which they earned, He would not leave a moving creature on the surface of the earth."⁵² This also can be related with several Ḥadīth as recorded: 'No physical harm befalls a believer, but Allah will expiate for some of his sins because of it.'⁵³ The subsequence indicated that 'corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]'.⁵⁴

According to al-Suyūṭī⁵⁵ and as-Sa'dī⁵⁶, what is mentioned 'so He may let them taste part of [the

⁴⁹ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī li al-Imām Abī 'Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl*, Book 60, Ḥadīth Number 3474 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2004), 861.

⁵⁰ The Qur'ān, 42:30.

⁵¹ 'Imād al-Dīn Abi Fidā' Isma'īl bin Kathīr al-Dimashqī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Azīm* (Cairo: Mu'assasah Qurṭubah, Vol. 11, 2000), 34.

⁵² The Qur'ān, 35: 45.

⁵³ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī li al-Imām Abī 'Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl*, Book 75, Ḥadīth Number 2, 1431.

⁵⁴ The Qur'ān 30: 41.

⁵⁵ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, Vol. 21 (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2001), 408.

consequence of] what they have done,' that is, so that they know that God rewards their deeds. So, Allah hastened the example (first) of the reward of their deeds in the world, 'so that they return,' from their deeds that have caused harm to themselves, so that their condition becomes good, their affairs become improved. God who has given His favours and trials and bestowed grace with His law. With this regard, Allah has ordained the pandemic to reprimand human attitudes that go against religious teachings and ignoring the Day of Judgement. In the face of a pandemic, people will repent and return to obey Allah's command, as narrated in the Hadith that 'immorality never appears among a people to such an extent that they commit it openly, but plagues and diseases that were never known among the predecessors will spread among them'.⁵⁷

Third, the pandemic is a means to teach humans that disease prevention and elimination cannot be solely dependent on rationality and science, but it is by God's decree and with his permission. There is a Hadith of the Messenger of God that tackled this issue, 'that there is no *'Adwa*, no contagious disease, is conveyed without Allah's permission, nor is there any bad omen, from birds, nor is there any *Hamah*, nor is there any bad omen in the month of Safar, and one should run away from the leper as one runs away from a lion'.⁵⁸ Most scholars interpret this hadith to mean that these things in and of themselves do not transmit or cause harm through supernatural or hidden

⁵⁶ 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Nāṣir al-Sa'dī, *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Rahmān fī Tafsīr Kalām al-Mannān* (Riyadh: Maktabah Dār al-Salām, 2002), 643.

⁵⁷ Muḥammad bin Yazīd Ibn Mājāh, *Sunan Ibn Mājāh*, Book 36, Ḥadīth 4019 (Riyadh: Maktabah Mālik Fahd al-Waṭaniyyah Athnā' al-Nashr, 2007), 620.

⁵⁸ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī li al-Imām Abī 'Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl*, Book 76, Ḥadīth Number 5707, 1447.

meanings; Allah is ultimately in control, and any fearful superstition around these words is false.

Islamic Perspective on Strategically Battling Pandemic

Islam has stated several instructions in preventing disease spread in the society and its surroundings. The necessity of following the prophetic guidance that was clearly stated in the condition of adopting the means of prevention and safety from disease before spreading in society. Thus, Islam has urged its followers to pay attention to their hygiene and purity to remain clean and away from everything that might transmit diseases and infection among them.

a) Travel bans

The holy prophet Muhammad (PBUH) recognized and proclaimed the importance of travel bans in disease-stricken areas to mitigate the spread of the disease. Narrated by Saud: The Prophet (PBUH) said, "If you hear of an outbreak of plague in a land, do not enter it; but if the plague breaks out in a place while you are in it, do not leave that place".⁵⁹ Based on Prophetic sayings, it is clear that, there should be neither harm nor malice; the suspension of group prayers is allowed by Islam to prevent harm and protect people from any form of damage resulting from epidemics.

The rationale behind the attitude of Muslims towards travel bans from the place of epidemics, was strengthened by an important incident that occurred during the time of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb. Narrated by 'Abd Allāh bin 'Abbās: 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb departed for Sham, and when he reached Sargh, the commanders of the (Muslim) army, Abu 'Ubaydah bin al-Jarrāh and his companions met and informed him that an epidemic had broken out in Sham. 'Umar said, "Call for me the early emigrants". So,

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Book 76, Ḥadīth Number 5728, 1451.

'Umar called them, consulted them and informed them that an epidemic had broken out in Sham. Those people differed in their opinions. Some of them said, "We have come out for a purpose, and we do not think that it is proper to give it up", while others said (to 'Umar), 'You have along with you other people and the companions of Allah's messenger, so do not advise that we take them to this epidemic'. 'Umar said to them, "Leave me now". Then he said, "Call the Anṣār for me". I called them, and he consulted them, and they followed the way of the emigrants and differed as they did. He then said to them, "... leave me now," and added, "Call for me the old people of Quraysh who emigrated in the year of the Conquest of Mecca". I called them, and they gave a unanimous opinion saying, "we advise that you should return with the people and do not take them to that (place) of the epidemic".

So, 'Umar made an announcement, "I will ride back to Medina in the morning, so you should do the same". Abu 'Ubaydah bin al-Jarrah said (to 'Umar), "Are you running away from what Allah had ordained?" 'Umar said, "Would that someone else have said such a thing, O Abu 'Ubaidah! Yes, we are running from what Allah had ordained to what Allah has ordained. Don't you agree that if you had camels that went down a valley having two places, one green and the other dry, you would graze them on the green one only if Allah had ordained that, and you would graze them on the dry one only if Allah had ordained that?" At that time, 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin 'Auf, who had been absent because of some job, came and said, "I have some knowledge about this. I have heard Allah's messenger, "If you hear about it (an outbreak of plague) in a land, do not go to it; but if the plague breaks out in a

country where you are staying, do not run away from it". Umar thanked Allah and returned to Medina.⁶⁰

Narrated by 'Abd Allāh bin Amir: 'Umar went to Sham, and when he reached Sargh, he obtained the news that an epidemic (of plague) had broken out in Sham. 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Auf told him that Allah's messenger 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".⁶¹ The wisdom of these lessons affirms that before any outbreak is otherwise established, it is necessary to assume the worst (and act accordingly). As a result, strict travel bans imposed much earlier in the pandemic timeline could very well contain the spread of the virus.

b) Quarantine

The holy prophet Muhammad (PBUH) highlighted the importance of quarantine to mitigate the spread of disease. Narrated by Abū Hurayrah: Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said: "The cattle (sheep, cows, camels, etc.) suffering from a disease should not be mixed up with healthy cattle, (or said: 'Do not put a patient with a healthy person) (as a precaution)." ⁶² Narrated by Abū Hurayrah: "Allah's Apostle said, No Adwa. Abu Huraira also said the Prophet (PBUH) said, "the cattle suffering from a disease should not be mixed up with healthy cattle or said, 'do not put a patient with a healthy person as a precaution". Abū Hurayrah also narrated Allah's messenger said, "no 'adwa". A Bedouin got up and said, "Don't you see how camels on the sand look like deer but when a mangy camel mix with them, they all get infected with mange?"

⁶⁰ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī li al-Imām Abī 'Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl*, Book 76, Hadith Number 5729, 1451.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Book 76, Hadith Number 5730, 1451.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Book 76, Hadith Number 5771, 2004), 1461.

On that, the Prophet (PBUH) said, "Then who conveyed the (mange) disease to the first camel?"⁶³

This tradition perfectly encapsulates the modern quarantine principle. What is currently being done [in regard to the coronavirus outbreak] is based on the same basis as the Prophet's (PBUH) guidance. As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to kill millions of people across the world, the Prophet Muhammed's advice on how to respond to a pandemic offers a motivation to people to stay put in their homes and protect themselves from the deadly virus.

c) **Hygiene**

In essence, Muslims are taught that physical cleanliness and spiritual purity are inextricably linked. Thus, the Holy Quran teaches, "Indeed, Allah loves those who turn to Him [repenting] and He loves those who keep themselves clean and pure."⁶⁴ Furthermore, Muslims have been taught proper handwashing skills and complete hygienic habits, which are hallmarks of Islam. A Muslim performs ablution before each of the five daily prayers, consisting of a ritual cleaning from head to toe with pure water. The holy prophet (PBUH) also taught via his actions that pure and unclean items should be handled with the right and left hands, respectively, and that a high level of cleanliness should be maintained daily, as narrated by Abū Hurayrah: "The Messenger of Allah said, 'whoever performs ablution, let him clean his nose, and whoever uses pebbles to clean himself after defecating, let him use an odd number'"⁶⁵ 'Abd Allāh bin Zayd bin Āṣim al-Mazinī reported, he saw Allah's Messenger (PBUH) perform the ablution. He rinsed his mouth, then cleaned his nose, then washed his face three times, then washed

⁶³*Ibid.*, Book 76, Hadith Number 5773, 1461.

⁶⁴The Qur'ān, 2:223.

⁶⁵ Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Book 1, Hadith Number 409, 69.

his right hand thrice and then the other one thrice. He then took fresh water, wiped his head, and then washed his feet until he cleaned them.⁶⁶

d) Seeking medical treatment

As taught by the holy prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Islam is a practical and progressive faith-based system. Therefore, the Prophet (PBUH) encouraged people to seek medical assistance while relying on the power of prayer. Once, he was asked by a group of Bedouins if it would be considered sinful if they did not seek medical treatment. He replied, "Seek (medical) treatment, O Slaves of Allah, for Allah does not create any disease, but He also creates with it the cure, except for old age".⁶⁷ Furthermore, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) clarified that seeking medical assistance coupled with divine intervention are the keys to successful treatment; "There is a remedy for every malady, and when the remedy is applied to the disease it is cured with the permission of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious".⁶⁸

e) Vaccination

Besides seeking medical treatment, Islam recommends that preventive measures should be taken, including vaccinations. Recent studies and reports demonstrate the overall effectiveness of vaccines against COVID-19.⁶⁹ An Executive Imam of All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) Center in Sterling, Imam Mohamed Magid's responses to Rabbi Julie Schonfeld on the importance of vaccines affirmed that the basics of vaccines are found in Islam. Therefore, he recommended that religious believers

⁶⁶ Al-Ḥajjāj bin Muslim al-Qusyairī al-Naysaburi, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 2, Ḥadīth 5 (n.p.: Dar al-Ta'sil, 2014), 122.

⁶⁷ Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Book 31, Ḥadīth Number 3436.

⁶⁸ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Muslim, Book 39, Ḥadīth Number 2204.

⁶⁹ Vaezi, A. & Meysamie, A., "COVID-19 Vaccines Cost-Effectiveness Analysis: A Scenario for Iran," *Vaccines* 10(1) (2022), 1-2.

take the vaccine because it benefits health and preserves life.⁷⁰ In countering the anti-vaccine myths and conspiracy theories against vaccines on social media,⁷¹ Imam Muhammad Amir Karim of the Abu Bakr Mosque in Cambridge stated that Islam recommended vaccination to safeguard diseases. Medicating oneself is a *sunnah*, a noble tradition of prophet Muhammad (PBUH); thus, every Muslim scholar should encourage vaccination.

The recommendation and permissibility in taking the COVID-19 vaccine have also been issued under the Islamic Verdict (*fatwa*) by the Malaysian Fatwa Committee of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs (MKI),⁷² Australian National Imams Council,⁷³ Egyptian Dar al-Iftaa,⁷⁴ and the UAE Fatwa Council,⁷⁵ Fatwa by the World Federation of KSIMC in the United

⁷⁰ "Rabbi Julie Schonfeld & Imam Magid - full interview," Religion News Service, Jan. 14, 2021, accessed May 24, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ur63vU5YbI_

⁷¹ "Cambridge Imam says Covid-19 Vaccine Myths Have Nothing to do with Islam," Cambridge Independent, accessed May 24, 2021, <https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/cambridge-imam-says-covid-19-vaccine-myths-have-nothing-to-do-with-islam-9156186/>.

⁷² "FT Mufti: Covid-19 vaccine permissible for Muslims," New Straits Times, accessed May 24, 2021, <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2021/02/665673/ft-mufti-covid-19-vaccine-permissible-Muslims>.

⁷³ "*Fatwa* Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccine *Fatwa*," Australian National Imams Council, accessed May 24, 2021, <https://www.anic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/AFC-Coronavirus-COVID-19-Vaccine-Fatwa.pdf>.

⁷⁴ "Egypt's Dar al-Ifta Authorizes Use of Covid-19 Vaccines Containing Pork Components," Asharq Al-Awsat, accessed May 24, 2021, <https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/2706451/egypts-dar-al-ifta-authorizes-use-covid-19-vaccine-containing-pork-components>.

⁷⁵ "UAE Fatwa Council: Covid Vaccine Use Allowed According to Islamic Laws," Khaleej Times, accessed May 24, 2021, <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/coronavirus-pandemic/uae-fatwa-council-covid-vaccine-use-allowed-according-to-islamic-laws>.

Kingdom,⁷⁶ and Turkey⁷⁷ among others. Meanwhile, the religious authorities permitted and recommended⁷⁸ the vaccine in Iran but were subjected to doctors' advice and medical guidelines.⁷⁹ However, American and British-made COVID-19 vaccines were prohibited due to Iran's skepticism toward Western policies.⁸⁰

In addition, some parties have claimed that the vaccines would result in more diseases and inconveniences, such as homosexuality. Nevertheless, none of these allegations was scientifically proven, and other clergies have dismissed them.⁸¹ Although the vaccinations can lead to a range of unwanted side effects (mild to severe), none of the reported side effects was life-threatening or worrying, and the benefits of vaccination are still very significant.⁸²

f) Comprehensive medical care

Free medical services and financial assistance during a pandemic are essential in preventing the spread of contagious diseases. If the people of a nation know that

⁷⁶ The World Federation of KSIMC, "COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance," accessed May 24, 2021, <https://www.world-federation.org/news/covid-19-vaccine-guidance>.

⁷⁷ "Teams Try to Persuade Skeptics to get Vaccinated," Hurriyet Daily News, accessed May 24, 2021, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/teams-try-to-persuade-skeptics-to-get-vaccinated-164730>.

⁷⁸ Vaezi, A. & Meysamie, A., "COVID-19 Vaccines Cost-Effectiveness Analysis: A Scenario for Iran," *Vaccines* 10(1) (2022), 1.

⁷⁹ Yoosefi Lebni, J., Ziapour, A., Mehedi, N. & Irandoost, S. F., "The Role of Clerics in Confronting the Covid-19 Crisis in Iran," *Journal of Religion and Health* 60(2021), 2387.

⁸⁰ "Iran Bans COVID Vaccines from UK, US," Al Jazeera, accessed May 24, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/8/iran-supreme-leader-bans-uk-us-coronavirus-vaccines>.

⁸¹ Lebni et al., "The Role of Clerics," 2387–2394.

⁸² Siahvoshi, S., Movahed, E. & Ghods, K., "Common Side Effects of COVID-19 Vaccines Used in Iran: A Review." *Annals of Military and Health Sciences Research* 19(4) (2022), 1.

this assistance will be provided, the sanctions that may otherwise lead to financial hardship are more often enforced without conflict. During the Caliph 'Umar administrations, the *Bayt al-Māl* (government treasury) was established. The taxes raised from this treasury were used to help the poor, the disabled, elderly, orphans, widows, and others in need. Moreover, the government was tasked with storing food supplies in times of drought or famine. It is reported that 'Umar was on his way to Sham when he met a group of Christians suffering from leprosy. He directed the government treasury to provide them with medical allowance immediately to obtain medical attention. In addition, 'Umar directed Muslims to watch the prisoners closely and, if possible, take care of all their medical needs.⁸³

g) Prayers for healing

Narrated by 'Abd al-'Azīz: Thabit and I went to Anas bin Malik. Thabit said, 'O Abu Hamza! I am sick'. On that Anas said, 'Shall I treat you with the Ruqya of Allah's Apostle?' Thabit said, 'Yes', Anas recited, 'O Allah! The Lord of the people, the Remover of trouble! (Please) cure (Heal) (this patient), for You are the Healer. None brings about healing but You; a healing that will leave behind no ailment'.⁸⁴

h) Motivation for the victims

Those who have experienced the passing of close friends and loved ones are often that their deceased are martyrs (*shuhadā'*) – a term applied to one who has heroically sacrificed their life for the sake of God. The loss of a loved one is a delicate subject, and it is best to be encouraging to a grieving family. As narrated by Aisha

⁸³ Abu 'Abbās Aḥmad bin Yahyā al-Balādūrī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Ma'ārif, 1987), 184.

⁸⁴ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī li al-Imām Abī 'Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl*, Book 76, Hadith Number 5742, 1454.

(the wife of the Prophet), none (among the believers) remains patient in a land in which plague has broken out and considers that nothing will befall him except what Allah has ordained for him, but that Allah will grant him a reward similar to that of a martyr.⁸⁵ Narrated by Abū Hurayrah, The Prophet (PBUH) said, "He (a Muslim) who dies of an abdominal disease is a martyr, and he who dies of plague is a martyr".⁸⁶ From the tradition, a holistic understanding of the Ḥadīth about martyrs in the hereafter allows us to refer to those who lost their lives to the virus as martyrs.

Based on the guidelines, Muslims can better prepare themselves to face the pandemic as reflected in history from when the Black Death arrived in Granada by 749/1349, when the ruling Sultan's chief minister, Ibn al-Jayyab, was carried off by the disease⁸⁷. Yesuf I promoted Ibn al-Jayyab's secretary, Ibn al-Khāṭib (1313–1374), to his master's former position and served as chief minister until Muhammad V's reign. In addition to being one of the most influential literates and brokers in his day, Ibn al-Khāṭib was a well-known Western figure because of his immediate support for plague infection theory. He rejected jurists' fatwa or legal decisions against the idea of contagion that, 'The presence of contagion is well-founded through experience, study, sensory perception, autopsy and authenticated knowledge, which is evidence'. This story also proves that Muslims did not give up on

⁸⁵ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī li al-Imām Abī 'Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl*, Book 60, Hadith Number 3474, 861.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Book 76, Hadith Number 5733, 1452.

⁸⁷ Syrakoy, A. C., Health, Spirituality and Power in Medieval Iberia: The Maristan and its Role in Nasrid Granada, in *Cities in the Pre-Modern Islamic World: The Urban Impact of Religion, State and Society*, eds. Bennison, A. K. & Gascoigne, A. L. (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2007), 188.

fighting the pandemic at that time, whether they died as martyrs or success in overcoming the plague.⁸⁸

Analysis and Discussion

The issue of a pandemic has been discussed widely in Islam. Theologically, Islam teaches that a pandemic is part of God's decree. Despite the perception that God is the root and enabler of all things, including a global plague,⁸⁹ the responsibilities also fall on humans. With this regard, Muslims attributed the ultimate cause of the plague to God, for example, celestial alignments, miasma, atmospheric poison, or diet. At the same time, Islam teaches that God gave both diseases and the means of dealing with them to humans and that God's will is not questioned. Thus, Muslims need to take precautionary measures to avoid the pandemic according to the Prophet's tradition (Ḥadīth).

It is essential to understand the notion of *tawakkul* as Islamic concept of reliance on God or trusting in God's plan together with continuing a practical manner in the effort to battle the pandemic spread. In particular, Muslims are urged to fulfil the Sharia rules' higher objectives, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, including avoiding actions that are likely to harm individuals and society. As noted by Mohamed Saladin et al.⁹⁰, the fundamental objective of *al-Sharī'ah* is to ensure and promote the wellbeing of all humanity and to avoid harm, and it must accomplish for the benefit of humankind. Therefore, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* constitutes each component

⁸⁸ Ober, W. B. & Alloush, N., "The Plague at Granada, 1348-1349: Ibn Al-Khatib and Ideas of Contagion," *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine: Journal of Urban Health* 58(4) (1982), 421.

⁸⁹ Stearns, J., "New Directions in the Study of Religious Responses to the Black Death I," *History Compass* 7(5) (2009), 1363.

⁹⁰ Mohamed Saladin, Mohamed Azmil & Siti Mariam, "Wellbeing of the Society: A Maqasid Shariah Approach," *Afkar: Journal of Aqidah & Islamic Thought* (Special Issue 1) (2020), 25.

identified with human instincts that classified by Islamic philosopher, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111) into five categorizes, which is interpreted as 'human well-being' and articulated as "safeguarding their faith (*dīn*), their self (*nafs*), their intellect ('*aql*), their posterity (*nasl*), and their wealth (*māl*)"⁹¹

In addition, among the strategic attempts to encounter the pandemic could begin with travel bans, quarantine, and maintaining self-hygiene. If infected, seek immediate medical treatment, and these treatments should be made accessible for the needy. It is essential to have faith in God during the recovery process by praying for health and recovery. On the other hand, if one's condition worsens with many complications and a low potential for survival, it is important to accept one's fate that has been determined by God. Indeed, those who succumb to contagious illnesses will be rewarded as a martyr. It reflects the holistic nature of Islam in guiding its followers, where the teachings are not limited to the spirituality dimension but also include physical and preventive measures in terms of health care.⁹²

Moreover, mosques were closed during the outbreak, and restrictions were applied for praying and ritual gathering, proving that Islam supports the theory of contagious disease by Ibn Sina (980-1037) or Avicenna in *al-Qānun fī Ṭib* (The Canon of Medicine). In one of his great works published in 1025, Ibn Sina combined the traditional and modern methods of approaching diseases.⁹³

⁹¹ Mergaliyev, A., Asutay, M., Avdukic, A. et al., "Higher Ethical Objective (*Maqasid al-Shari'ah*) Augmented Framework for Islamic Banks: Assessing Ethical Performance and Exploring Its Determinants," *Journal of Business Ethics* 170 (2021), 797.

⁹² Ashy, M. A., "Health and Illness from an Islamic Perspective," *Journal of Religion and Health* 38(3) (1999), 241.

⁹³ Saffari, M. & Pakpour, A. H., "Avicenna's Canon of Medicine: A Look at Health, Public Health, and Environmental Sanitation," *Archives of Iranian Medicine* 15(12) (2012), 785.

He was not independent in providing good guidance in a pandemic but supported by other sources *as al-Manṣūrī fī al-Ṭīb* and *Kitāb al-Tajārib* by al-Rāzī (854–925), *Hidayat al-Muta'allimīn fī al-Ṭīb* by al-Akhawynī (d. 938), *Tuḥfah al-Mu'minīn* by Ḥakim Mukmin, *Khulāṣah al-Ḥikmah* by Aghilī Shirāzī and *Mufarah al-Ghulub* by Ḥakim Arzanī.⁹⁴ Mahroozade et al.,⁹⁵ suggested that in countering the epidemic, such as the plague and cholera, natural remedies called 'teryagh' were used by early Muslims. Examples of these traditional remedies are *Citrus aurantium*, *Curcuma zedoaria*, *Rheum ribes*, *Allium cepa* and *Artemisia dracunculus*, known for their pharmacological properties such as antimicrobial and antifungal anti-inflammatory, antiviral, antioxidant and immunostimulatory properties.

The method used by Muslim scientists and physicists was based on *al-Tibb al-Nabawi* (the prophetic medicine), an alternative to Greek medicine.⁹⁶ The Prophet (PBUH) practiced it in his lifetime, based on the Quranic text. Islam does not reject everything from other sources and civilizations⁹⁷ as long it benefits humankind⁹⁸, but with

⁹⁴ Iranzadasl, M., Karimi, Y., Moadeli, F. & Pasalar, M., "Persian Medicine Recommendations for the Prevention of Pandemics Related to the Respiratory System: A Narrative Literature Review," *Integrative Medicine Research* 10(1) (2021), 1.

⁹⁵ Mahroozade, S., Mohammadi Kenari, H., Eghbalian, F., Ghobadi, A. & Yousefsani, B. S., "Avicenna's Points of View in Epidemics: Some Advice on Coronavirus 2 (COVID-19)," *Complementary Medicine Research* 28 (2021), 175–176.

⁹⁶ Velayati, Ali Akbar, *Ensiklopedia Islam dan Iran* (Bandung: Mizan Publika, 2010), 198-199.

⁹⁷ Liya Khaulah Asy-Syaimaa' Hussain & Ahmad Faizuddin Ramli, "Contributions of Islamic Civilization to The Mathematics Development," *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama dan Sosial Budaya* 2(2) (2017), 207.

⁹⁸ Jaffary Awang, Ahmad Faizuddin Ramli & Zaizul Ab Rahman, "Refleksi al-Ghazali dalam Dialog Antara Agama", *Islamiyyat: International Journal of Islamic Studies* 44(Special) (2022): 97.

certain modifications⁹⁹. In a nutshell, Islam provides a suitable solution for overcoming the pandemic, besides supporting *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), other rational resources, and modern sciences in the proper management of daily life. On top of that, Islamic theology can help overcome the panic and fear of the pandemic since Muslims already understand the nature of the pandemic from both theological and practical aspects.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

In this article, the critical elaboration of pandemic was widely discussed by analysing the contents of sacred scriptures and responses from the Islamic point of view. The implication of this study was present through the theological discourse on the pandemic, which has been addressed in the primary Islamic texts of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. Furthermore, the strategic value in making an effort to combat the pandemic should be presented to identify the existence of a pandemic as a test and response from God to humankind.

Moreover, Islam addresses the range of preventive actions that could be made to combat the outbreak, such as a travel ban to avoid mass gathering among humans, urge for quarantine, hygiene maintenance, medical care, and vaccination, and prayers for the healing and elimination of the pandemic. Apart from that, the following actions are made by improving the faith and spiritual connection with God while practicing cooperation among humans on the basis of humanity.

⁹⁹ Che Zarrina Sa'ari & Mohd Manawi Mohd Akib, "Beberapa Persoalan Berkaitan Konsep Insan," *Afkar: Journal of Aqidah & Islamic Thought* 19(Special Issue) (2017), 87.

¹⁰⁰ Wibisono, M. Y., Truna, D. S. & Rahman, M. T., "Turning Religion from Cause to Reducer of Panic during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77(4) (2021), 1.

The theological discourses as a core in understanding and overcoming pandemics need to be adapted in the current context to ensure its practicality. In this case, the most crucial aspect is how the religious followers can benefit through appropriate actions. Therefore, in the context of religion, the guidelines built based on the theological framework must be implemented with the involvement of all parties, especially religious institutions and governments. The government needs to offer the best service to the community, which covers the aspects of health, legal, social, education, and welfare that include the provision of treatment to the infected individuals, implementation of disease control laws, provision of incentives to people affected by the pandemic, and dissemination of valuable information to curb the pandemic.

In line with the theme 'Islam is a way of life', religious authorities and institutions need to provide full support in ensuring the success of this mission, which includes providing religious advice and guidance to the community, especially encouraging people for vaccination instead of merely providing guidelines in religious rituals during the outbreak. In addition, counselling and consultation services are recommended to improve the psychological and physiological well-being of Muslims in facing the challenges of the current pandemic.

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