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Intellectual Discourse
Vol. 30, No. 1, 2022

Contents

<i>Note from the Editor</i>	1
 Research Articles	
Understanding Malaysian Youth's Social Media Practices and Their Attitude towards Violent Extremism <i>Nurzali Ismail</i> <i>Jasmine Mohamed Jawhar</i> <i>Danial Mohd Yusuf</i> <i>Anis Izzati Ismail</i> <i>Raja Muhammad Khairul Akhtar Raja Mohd Naguib</i>	5
Should Heterogeneity Matter? The Case of Malaysia: Evaluating Public Service Motivation in a Non-Homogenous Society <i>Nadia Hezlin Yashaiya</i> <i>Abdillah Noh</i>	35
The Issue of the Elderly Homeless in Kuala Lumpur: Family Neglect and Its Contributing Factors <i>Zulkhairol Shukri</i> <i>Nik Norliati Fitri Md Nor</i> <i>Nurul Raffiza Norzehan</i>	59
Muslim Inventors of Reading and Writing Methods for the Blind: Predecessors of Braille <i>Awad Al-Khalaf</i> <i>Kassem Saad</i> <i>Adam Abdullah</i> <i>Mona Shehade</i> <i>Najla Aljarwan</i>	83

In the Name of Covid-19: Democratic Reversal and the Return of Authoritarian Malaysia under Muhyiddin's Perikatan Nasional <i>Muhamad M.N. Nadzri</i>	107
Confirmation Bias among Adherents of Red and Yellow Politics in Thailand <i>Norachit Jirasatthumb</i> <i>Phumsith Mahasuweerachai</i> <i>Atchara Sorasing</i>	135
Secularisation of Muslim Students: A Freirean Perspective on Biological Evolution Teaching in Islamic Schools <i>Ahmad Naharuddin Ramadhan</i> <i>Marzuki</i> <i>Heru Nurcahyo</i> <i>Bustami Subhan</i>	157
The Role of Mass Media As A Channel To Learn About Islam Among Muslims In Gombak <i>Kamaruzzaman bin Abdul Manan</i> <i>Mohd Noh bin Abdul Jalil</i> <i>Muhammad Ayman al-Akiti</i> <i>Lihanna binti Borhan</i> <i>Majdan bin Alias</i> <i>Shukran bin Abd Rahman</i> <i>Khamsiah binti Mohd Ismail</i>	187
The Best Solution for Pandemic Prevention of Covid-19: Important Notes in Light of the Quranic Perspectives <i>Abur Hamdi Usman</i> <i>Muhd. Najib Abdul Kadir</i> <i>Mohd Farid Ravi Abdullah</i>	213
Propagating an Alternative Solution for Indonesia`s Problems: A Framing Analysis on Hizb ut-Tahrir`s Narratives <i>Hasbi Aswar</i>	237

Book Review

AL-KAWAKIBI, Abdul Rahman. *The Nature of Tyranny and The Devastating Results of Oppression*. Foreword by Leon T. Goldsmith. Translated by Amer Chaikhouni. London: Hurst, 2021, 152 pp. Hardback.
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The Best Solution for Pandemic Prevention of Covid-19: Important Notes in Light of the Quranic Perspectives

Abur Hamdi Usman*
Muhd. Najib Abdul Kadir**
Mohd Farid Ravi Abdullah***

Abstract: This article analytically discusses how the Quran commands Muslims to be prudent in the face of a pandemic crisis. The Quran is the holy book of Islam and is considered by Muslims to be the word of God and is a valid source of guidance alongside science advisories from government authorities. Using a qualitative method, this study investigates the Quranic assertion that in the face of a pandemic crisis, Muslims are required to do charitable deeds and keep striving with the hope that the solution to problems people face can be actively found, rather than just fatalistically surrendering to fate and Allah's power alone. In this regard, the Quran commands Muslims to be prudent and to take precautions against the spread of disease, practice charity, endure, not be fooled by false gossip and to place trust in the religious and health authorities during times of crisis.

Keywords: Pandemic, Covid-19, solution, health, light of the Quran

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Abstrak: Artikel ini secara analitikal membincangkan bagaimana al-Quran memerintahkan umat Islam untuk berhemah dalam menghadapi krisis pandemik. Al-Quran adalah kitab suci agama Islam dan dianggap oleh Muslim sebagai firman Tuhan dan merupakan sumber panduan yang sah di samping nasihat sains daripada pihak berkuasa kerajaan. Dengan menggunakan kaedah kualitatif, kajian ini menyiasat penegasan al-Quran bahawa dalam menghadapi krisis pandemik, umat Islam dituntut untuk beramal dan terus berusaha dengan harapan penyelesaian kepada masalah yang dihadapi manusia dapat dicari secara aktif, bukan hanya menyerah diri secara fatal kepada takdir dan kekuasaan Allah SWT semata-mata. Dalam hal ini, al-Quran memerintahkan umat Islam untuk berhemah dan mengambil langkah berjaga-jaga terhadap penularan penyakit, beramal, bersabar, tidak terpedaya dengan gosip palsu dan meletakkan kepercayaan kepada pihak berkuasa agama dan kesihatan semasa krisis.

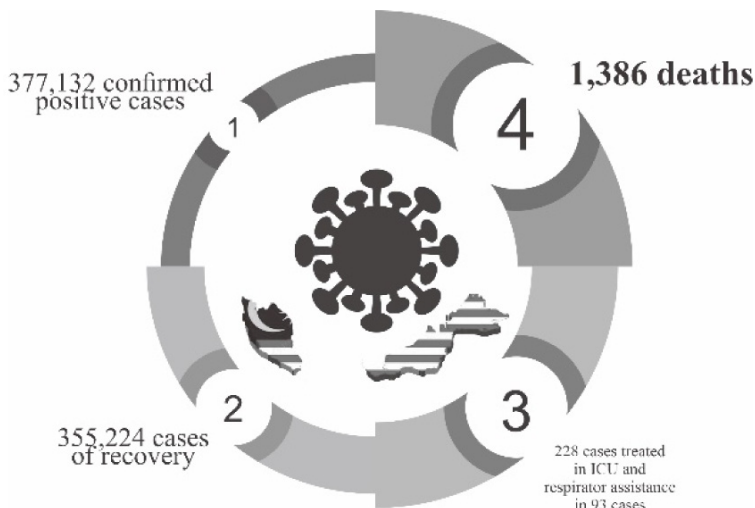
Kata kunci: Pandemik, Covid-19, penyelesaian, kesihatan, cahaya al-Quran

Introduction

The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic is a worldwide phenomenon. As of now, millions of people have been infected by this pandemic, and too many lives have been lost. The spread was so fast that the entire world was stumped and left in a state of restlessness and anger. All countries of the world had to deal with this global phenomenon by taking drastic preventive measures so that its transmission could be controlled and subsequently stopped altogether (Komarova, Schang, & Wodarz, 2020).

In the Malaysian context, the Covid-19 pandemic was confirmed to have spread on 25 January 2020. In Kuala Lumpur, a 14,000 strong delegation of Islamic *Tablighi-Jamaat* was widely considered the cause of the second wave of the pandemic in Malaysia, with attendees from the event travelling to Brunei, Cambodia and Indonesia and later testing positive with the virus (Barmania & Reiss, 2021). As shown in Figure 1, on 19 April 2021, there were 377,132 confirmed positive cases with 355,224 cases of recovery, 2,078 new cases, 1,386 deaths, 228 cases treated in ICUs and respiratory assistance required in ninety-three cases (“Current Situation of Covid-19”, 2021).

Figure 1: Covid-19 Data in Malaysia, as of 19th April 2021



Source: Current Situation of Covid-19 (2021)

To date, the Malaysian government has implemented several phases of restriction when the Covid-19 pandemic occurred. Among them were the movement control order (MCO), the enhanced movement control order (EMCO), the conditional movement control order (CMCO), and the recovery movement control order (RMCO) (Ng et al., 2020). According to Yildırım, Arslan, and Alkahtani (2021), fear of Covid-19 and negative religious coping may be detrimental to mental health, while positive religious coping may reduce depression and stress. Hence, the spread of pandemics such as Covid-19 needs to be endured wisely (includes individual coping strategies or regulatory prevention strategies) to avoid other problems such as depression and mental disorders. The lockdowns and social restrictions led to a decrease in wellbeing (Morres et al., 2021). According to Weber and Pargament (2014), religion and spirituality can enhance mental health by encouraging constructive religious coping mechanisms, community and support, and affirming beliefs. Additionally, studies examining religious coping in medically ill patients have found that between 34% and 86% have reported using their religious/spiritual thoughts and activities in coping with their illness (Thune-Boyle, Stygall, Keshtgar, & Newman, 2006). From all this, we must manage the Covid-19 crisis with efficiency and wisdom to reduce the negative effects on the individual and society. From the

Islamic perspective, Allah does not send down a calamity without a positive aspect of wisdom behind it, as spoken in the words of the Prophet, which means:

From ‘Ā’ishah, the wife of the Prophet said: “I have asked the Prophet about the plague. Then the Prophet told me that it is a punishment sent by Allah to whomever He wills, and Allah made it a blessing for the believers. No one was affected by the plague of this Year while they were staying in their own country with patience and thoughtfulness, and they understood that nothing happened to them unless everything was determined by Allah, even then they will be rewarded with martyrdom.” (Narrated by al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā’*, *Bāb Ḥadīth al-Ghār*; hadith number 3287).

Conrad (1982) argued about how plague terminology is used in Arabic sources, which in many instances offer testimony of the highest value. Conrad (1982) said, in classical Arabic, the term *tā’ūn* is usually assumed to mean “plague”, while *wabā’* is considered a more general term for “epidemic” or “pestilence”. Hence, in the Arabic writings about the plague of the fourteenth century and after, one repeatedly encounters the maxim, “Every *tā’ūn* is a *wabā’*, but not every *wabā’* is a *tā’ūn*.” According to this hadith, the test of the spread of disease was a punishment for unbelievers (*kuffār*). However, as Muslims, it can be considered mercy from God (al-‘Asqalānī, 2005). Therefore, the plague or *tā’ūn* is sent by God to whomever He wills as a token of divine mercy for Muslims since it guarantees them entry into Paradise as martyrs. This portrayal of the epidemic as a manifestation of divine kindness and the tremendous recompense that will be bestowed upon those who perish as a result of it must be contextualised within a broader view of disease, and challenges or trials in general, as a type of test (*ibtilā’*). Test as a means of establishing one’s faith and sincerity is a central concept in religious traditions, which is undoubtedly true of Islam as well (Shabana, 2021).

A Muslim should therefore take no action to flee from the plague or enter an area known to be infected since both actions are attempts to foil the will of God (Conrad, 1981). It is nevertheless cannot be understood as ‘fatalistically surrendering’ as the effort shown by ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb in the famous incident of the plague that hit Syria. According to reports, when ‘Umar was on his approach to Syria, the

army's leaders went out to meet him to inform him of the outbreak of the plague. When he conferred with his companions, a disagreement arose. While some believed they should continue to Syria according to their original plan when they left Medina, others believed they should return and avoid spreading the disease to other Muslims. After more contemplation, 'Umar chose to return to Medina and avoid exposing the people with him to the sickness. At that point, the army's leader, Abū 'Ubayda ibn al-Jarrāh, posed an exclamatory question on whether 'Umar was escaping from God's destiny by doing so. 'Umar reacted by emphasising that he would be escaping from one God's destiny to the next. The report finishes with a Prophetic warning not to enter or exit an impacted location. According to the report, 'Umar was unaware of the Prophet's words before deciding to return to Medina. When another companion, 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn 'Awf brought it to his attention, 'Umar was satisfied that his conclusion matched this counsel. This report has inspired discussions on the extent to which one can exercise one's agency in response to an action or event perceived to be part of divine destiny (Shabana, 2021).

Regarding the pandemic, throughout history, Muslims have experienced similar disasters. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852 H) in his book *Badhl al-Mā'ūn fī Faql al-Ṭā'ūn* records that in 749H there was a great plague epidemic in the city of Damascus, Syria. To eliminate the epidemic, the villagers prayed together in the open. al-'Asqalānī (nd.: 328-329) said:

And the men came out towards the open fields with influential people and dignitaries of the country, and they prayed to Allah. Thus, the plague epidemic became much worse and more widespread, while before they gathered together for prayer, the epidemic was contained.

A similar incident, according to al-'Asqalānī (nd.), occurred closer to the present day, namely in Cairo, Egypt dated 27 Rabiulakhir year 833 H. Al-'Asqalānī (nd.: 328-329) said:

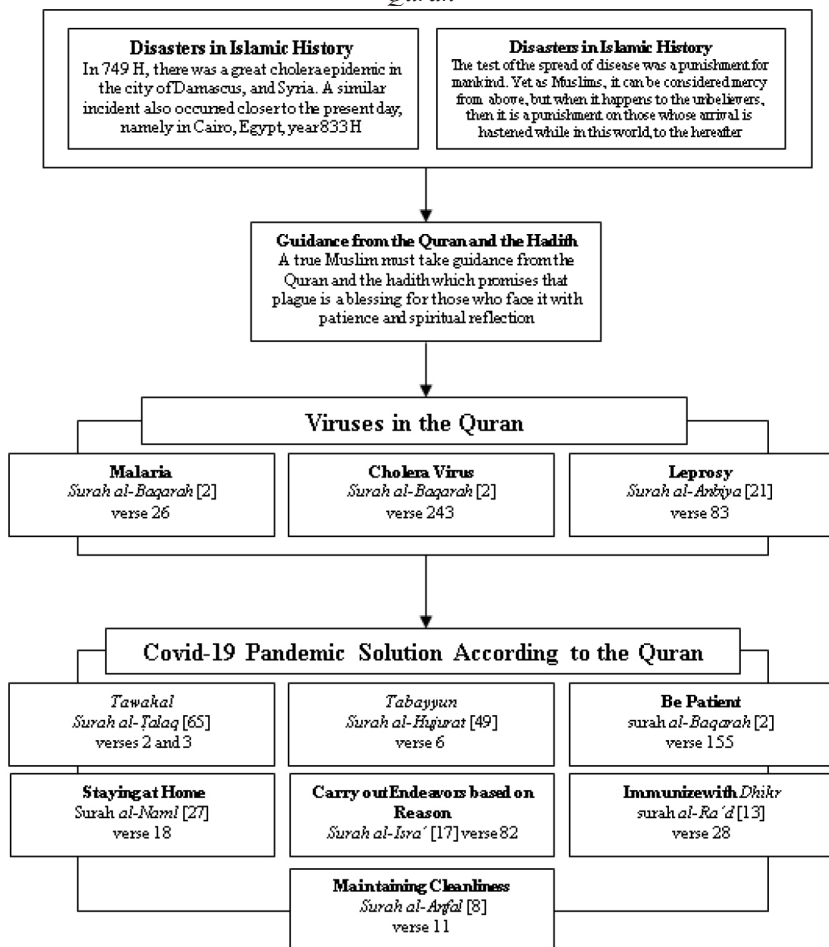
The number of people who died due to the epidemic numbered below 40. They then went out towards the open field on 4th Jamadilawal after being asked to fast for three days in advance. As with the *Istisqā'* (prayer for rain), they prayed and completed the prayer immediately before returning home. In less than a month, the number of people

dead every day in Cairo reached a thousand and continued to increase.

The historical record on the spread of the epidemic, as narrated by al-‘Asqalānī above, proves that the phenomenon of epidemics has been going on for a long time (Ayalon, 2021). Therefore, the current generation must be prepared to face this pandemic by placing religious guidance in primary position. Religion has always played the role of a balm for the soul, and regular religious participation is associated with better emotional health outcomes (Kowalczyk et al., 2020). For those who believe in God, seeing oneself as having a close bond with God could yield emotional benefits. People may find comfort by believing that an all-powerful deity will provide support, guidance, and protection (Exline, Grubbs, & Homolka, 2015). Accordingly, as a religion that covers the entire lifestyle of its adherents, Islam has its set rules, procedures, and standards for daily life. As a universal or holistic religion that guides people to the right path, including when faced with dangerous pandemics such as Covid-19, reflecting on arguments from Islamic sources as a guide (including in terms of preventive measures and effects) (Ameen et al., 2020) can reveal the hidden wisdom behind this global pandemic.

In this article, the author parses the methods for managing challenges people face from Covid-19 using the Quran as the primary source of legislation in Islam. The breakdown is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: *The best Covid-19 pandemic prevention solution in the light of the Quran*



On Viruses in the Light of the Quran

According to Islam, all organisms such as cells, viruses, bacteria and even the biosphere are Allah’s creation, consisting of various forms involving unique structures (Mehmood et al., 2021). An interesting study conducted by scholars from Algeria argued that *al-Muddaththir* [74], a sura in the Quran, discusses viruses, which can be explicitly applied to Covid-19 (Khenenou, Laabed, & Laabed, 2020). Other Quranic verses that discuss viruses are 2:26 & 243, and 21:83.

i. al-Baqarah [2] verse 26 on Mosquitoes

An epidemic is a natural phenomenon that should not be taken lightly. Throughout history, among the epidemics that have shocked the world are mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue, both major global health problems faced by the human population. The single-cell protozoan responsible for malaria and the virus that causes dengue, both carried by mosquitoes, are leading causes of death and disease throughout tropical and subtropical countries (Cowman et al., 2016). Although mosquitoes are small insects, they can significantly impact human life. John Robert McNeill, a history professor and author of *Mosquito Empires*, mentions that mosquitoes can even influence world change in some situations. In the history of wars of the 20th century, the number of casualties from disease transmitted by mosquitoes was proven greater than that of weapons (McNeill, 2010). In the Quran, 2:26 can be referred to regarding the plague that comes from this tiny insect.

The parable found in Quran, 2:26 reflects the power of Allah, who can create small creatures like the mosquito and so can create even smaller life forms such as the Covid-19 virus. Suppose the existence of a tiny pest like the mosquito can cause humans to suffer from deadly diseases such as dengue fever. In that case, it is only natural that a micro-sized virus can kill millions of people around the world today (Laishram et al., 2012). Therefore, it is understood that the smaller something is, the more difficult it can be to unravel its secrets (al-Rāzī, 1995). Although the polytheists are cynical about the small animals as mentioned by Allah in the Quran, scientific studies of today find that the creation of small animals such as mosquitoes reflects the greatness of Allah in creation (Othman & Yusoff, 2012).

Although mosquitoes are tiny in shape and form, they have a significant relationship with human health. From ancient times to the present, mosquitoes have been the leading cause of significant health problems for humans and livestock worldwide. Mosquitoes cause various diseases. The Anopheles mosquito is a malaria vector; the Aedes mosquito is a dengue, yellow fever (in America and Africa) and encephalitis (in America and Europe) vector. Meanwhile, the Mansonia and Culex mosquitoes are filariasis vectors (Salleh, 1997). Humans get various diseases through mosquitoes, such as dengue fever, malaria and others. However, the effects of mosquito bites are negligible to humans,

with only allergic reactions such as itching, red swelling on the body and so on. The danger of mosquitoes is that they are vectors or carriers of microorganisms or parasites that cause fatal or debilitating diseases (Salleh, 1997).

ii. al-Baqarah [2] verse 243 on the Plague Virus

The Quran insists on the prohibition of leaving one's hometown or area affected by the plague. The plague epidemic that broke out among the Israelites a long time ago can be used as a lesson for the current generation, as stated by Allah in Quran, 2:243.

Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabari (d. 310 H.), shared this interpretation of verse 243 from sura *al-Baqarah* through the account of a majority of companions and followers that the Israelites fled from their villages in groups, and they either fled to avoid fighting their enemies or to escape from the plague (al-Ṭabari, nd.; Conrad, 1981). Ibn Kathīr (2000) added this interpretation by quoting Ibn 'Abbās's view that the Israelites numbered four thousand, all leaving their homelands to avoid the plague affecting their state.

In response to the interpretation of the account above, Muslims can cite the wisdom of teachings and evidence that show that there is no benefit of vigilance in the face of destiny, and there is no refuge from Allah save by Him. Ibn Kathīr (2000) opined that the Israelites ran away to escape the epidemic that struck them to continue their lives. However, in the end, the fate that befell them was the opposite of what was expected. Death came swiftly and destroyed them all. Despite the strictness of the law in entering and fleeing from an area plagued by disease outbreaks, there is debate among scholars about *rukḥṣah* (a special dispensation that can be invoked in the case of an emergency situation with only one plausible solution, the non-performance of which will threaten human life or well-being) for those in the area to get out of it or vice versa. It can be pointed out that there is flexibility for certain groups to do so with certain conditions, as explained by al-Qurṭubī (2006) in his Quranic exegesis. For example, obtaining or providing treatment, performing employment, running a business, pursuing studies, providing essential services, delivering assistance, controlling security, or others related to general and special benefits are included in the *rukḥṣah* that can be considered necessary. However, it is still subject to the conditions from authoritative reference experts such

as obtaining confirmation of not suffering from or carrying the virus of the disease for those who wish to do so, and other related.

iii. al-Anbiyā' [21] verse 83 on leprosy

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is caused by a *Mycobacterium leprae* infection (Worobec, 2009). Leprosy is one of the major skin diseases that causes body deformities. The consequence of this disease is paralysis of the limbs with symptoms of pain, fever, loss of limb function, and eventually leading to mental disorders or death (Arikrishnan, 2020). In the Quran, this disease has been mentioned in sura Quran, 21:83.

In his interpretation, Ibn Kathīr (2000) stated that Allah spoke about Prophet Ayub (Job) and the calamity that befell him as a test. The tragedy befell his property, children, as well as his body. Prophet Ayub was a wealthy person who owned much livestock and agricultural land. He also had many children and a large comfortable home. So, Allah tested Prophet Ayub's faith by first taking away his property; all of them disappeared without a trace. Then the test was imposed on the body of the Prophet Ayub himself. The ailment that attacked him was leprosy on his whole body. Not a single part of his body was safe from this illness, except the heart and tongue that always remembered praising Allah. This specific test of the Prophet Ayub made the people around him not want to be near him. So, Prophet Ayub secluded himself in the city's outskirts where he lived. No human being wanted to come near him save his wife, who oversaw caring for and managing his daily needs.

Based on the interpretation, it can be understood that leprosy suffered by Prophet Ayub was so severe that the people around did not want to approach him. The action of the whole community distancing themselves from Prophet Ayub was in line with the words of the Prophet. The Prophet specifically stressed that the public must stay away from leprosy patients for fear of being infected. As narrated by Abū Hurairah, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) stated, "[t]here are no contagious diseases, ill omens, owls nor şafar (which are considered to bring misfortune). Stay away from leprosy just as you flee from a lion." (Narrated by al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ṭib, Bāb al-Judhām*, hadith number 5707).

In this noble hadith, an elaborate medical plan was developed by the illiterate prophet at a time when there was no known "quarantine"

or others, obliging the Muslim who is present in a country where the plague was rampant not to come out of it even if he is healthy because he may have carried the disease, and whoever is outside the country should not enter it. Also, isolation and blocking epidemics are required from a religious point of view. Islam forbade the exit of a person from an endemic environment into a safe environment, and he does not enter into an endemic environment while in a healthy environment (Al Eid & Arnout, 2020).

Hence, the argument of avoiding infectious diseases such as leprosy has been compared to avoiding the Covid-19 viral disease because it resembles a cause and effect in terms of infectious concern. Logically, staying away from people suspected of having the Covid-19 virus is more important because it is difficult to ascertain whether a person is indeed positive compared to leprosy, which can be detected and clearly seen (Ramos-e-Silva & Rebello, 2001).

Covid-19 Pandemic Solution According to the Understanding of Quranic Guidance

Based on the thematic study conducted on the Quran's verses related to plague, specifically, there were no control and treatment methods for the plague in the Quran. Even so, some interpreters associate plague with the kind of punishment that was once inflicted on the Israelites (Fancy & Green, 2021). Other accounts remain silent and do not interpret the type of punishment the Israelites faced. Nevertheless, it is possible to work out some of the concepts listed below as methods that can be derived to control or treat Covid-19 according to the light of the Quran.

i. Tawakkul (Trust in God)

Islam emphasises faith's strength, which acts as an emergency medical treatment (Alyanak, 2020). Individuals who experience avoidance or anxious attachment to God reported higher levels of anxiety and depression, lower levels of life satisfaction, and poorer physical health compared to individuals with a secure attachment to God (Parenteau, Hurd, Wu, & Feck, 2019). Theoretically, the element of reliance or *tawakkul* is evaluated as a principal factor in determining one's spiritual intelligence (Nemati, Rassouli, & Baghestani, 2017). It functions to produce a strong soul, leading an individual towards high resilience in the face of life's challenges (Huda, Yusuf, Azmi Jasmi, & Zakaria,

2016). *Tawakkul* refers to the state of the heart that depends entirely on Allah and feels calm with Him and without fear (Ibn Qayyim, 1993). *Tawakkul* also means trusting Allah's purpose in carrying out a plan, leaning on Him and surrendering oneself under His protection (al-Ghazālī, 1998; Watt, 1986).

In this way, an individual who applies *tawakkul* will give birth to a strong soul because he is confident that Allah will always help and guide him in all aspects of behaviour. This then shapes the individual into a person with high resilience in the face of life's challenges (Usman, Stapa, & Abdullah, 2020), as decreed by Allah in Quran, 65:2-3. This strategy may be a reactive process in response to a stressor (resulting in prayers for help), a lifelong trained habit (in terms of a "trait"), or the conviction that faith is a stronghold and God is at one's side whatever life brings. This can be regarded as a robust basic trust in God, who is expected to carry one through such phases of insecurity or illness. As a result, people who rely on theistic beliefs may pray for distinct reasons: to connect with the Sacred (communication), to become healthy again (invocation), or to articulate fears and worries without any further expectation of healing (which nevertheless may result in feelings of relief). Interestingly, research on this topic has shown that most patients with chronic diseases pray to find relief from their suffering; they do not necessarily pray to receive healing, but to "positively transform the experience of their illness" (Büssing, Recchia, & Baumann, 2015).

ii. Tabayyun (research/verification)

The spread of the Covid-19 virus has impacted various sectors of life, including economic growth and mental health. As the entire world struggles in the face of this pandemic, various inappropriate statements or writings (fake news) are uploaded or shared on various social media sites, adding to the existing tensions worldwide. Additionally, many chain messages of false information have been spread to the public regarding the Covid-19 virus. There is fear that the spread of false statements or materials related to this issue will cause concern and panic among the community. Thus, in the seriousness of fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, the Quran urges the community not to underestimate the matter of *tabayyun*.

With that, Allah commands all to conduct research and get the truth of the news conveyed by a person to avoid unwanted events (Usman,

Sailin, & Mutalib, 2019). Allah shows this matter in the Quran, 49:6. When interpreting this verse, al-Ṭabarī (nd.) states that *tabayyun* is the intention of delaying for a while the information or news that arrives until one knows with confidence it is undeniably the truth. This means that one should not be in a hurry to receive news. Allah's command to first carefully examine the news, according to Ibn Kathīr (2000), as an advised precautionary measure (*iḥtiyāf*). This ensures that a person does not pre-judge with reckless words, which could lead to lies or factual errors.

iii. Patience

The scourge of the Covid-19 pandemic needs to be faced patiently and wisely by Muslims. Acts of extreme annoyance or despair in the face of such a situation should be avoided; it is better to try to reflect upon and understand the wisdom behind it (Mandal & Pal, 2020). This pandemic should be understood as a form of test from Allah on His servants. With the success of being patient in facing this test, a person can get unfathomable joy from Allah. The Quran records the words of Allah in 2:155 as to the importance of patience (Afsaruddin, 2007; Al Eid & Arnout, 2020).

Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abū Bakr al-Anṣarī al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 H.), author of the book *al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān wa al-Mubayyin li mā Taḍammanahu min al-Sunnah wa Āiy al-Furqān*, when interpreting Quran, 2:155 states that a reward is provided and promised by Allah for those who are patient. The origin of patience is restraint, and its reward is innumerable. However, it will not be obtained unless patience occurs at the beginning of the test (al-Qurṭubī, 2006). Outwardly, the views of this insightful account may come across to Muslims who evaluate the tests of Allah as sometimes brutal and cruel. However, when viewed in a new light, it is found that the fruit of patience contains grace.

It is not farfetched to claim that testing is a way Allah signifies his love for his servants. Through a life test such as Covid-19, a person can be made aware of his smallness and the greatness of Allah. Thus, a person will become increasingly humble towards his God, continuously asking for forgiveness and repenting of all sins and wrongdoings. Therefore, patience in facing this test of life is evaluated as a virtue in the eyes of religion (Al Eid & Arnout, 2020). In line with that, an

account of the hadith narrated by Suhaib stated that the Prophet (pbuh) explicated as such:

The condition of a believer is amazing. The whole affair is good; this matter is not found except in a believer. If he gets pleasure, he is grateful. Then it is good for him. If he gets into trouble, he is patient, then that also is good for him. (Narrated by Muslim, *Kitāb al-Zuhd wa al-Raqā'iq*, *Bāb al-Mu'min amruhu kulluhu khair*, hadith number 2999).

iv. Staying at Home

Staying at home is surely a good option in some cases but not in all (i.e., fire, tsunamis). However, during the Covid-19 outbreak, this solution is highly recommended and can help reduce activities associated with the spread of plague (Moreland et al., 2020). Hence, the Quran emphasised the importance of staying in one's home when in a situation of danger, as decreed by Allah in 27:18. This sura presents the account of the Prophet Solomon's army in the Valley of the Ants. While some scholars accept the literal meaning and suggest a miracle in communicating with ants, others believe "The Ants" was the name of a human tribe that Solomon encountered (El-Mallak, & El-Mallakh, 1994).

In this sura, Allah describes how an ant was so concerned about the safety of other ants, advising them to enter their nests so as not to be trampled by the Prophet Solomon and his armies. Ibn Kathīr (2000) interprets that when the Prophet Solomon and his army reached the valley of the ants, one of the ants was worried about his people who would perish because they were trampled by the horses of the army of the Prophet Solomon. So, he called on his fellow-creatures to immediately enter their nests.

According to the former Sheikh of al-Azhar, Muḥammad Mustafā al-Marāghī (d. 1945), the story of the ants in the Quran is meant to be a lesson to the rational so that they can understand the state of these creatures. The situation of the ants that had successfully gathered their friends to escape from any danger by organising themselves to find resources (al-Marāghī, 1946). As a result, it can be understood that the orderliness and discipline found in the ant kingdom, as stated by Allah in the above verse, the ants sought immediate protection (after receiving a warning from their scout) so as not to be trampled by Prophet Solomon and his army. Indirectly, Allah also reminds human beings

that in striving to meet their daily needs, they should also prioritise the common good to take refuge in one's house from the evils that come and other calamities.

The ant was one of the soldier ants whose role was to defend the colony and protect it from danger. Logically, these worker ants were the first to detect any danger approaching the colony, such as the arrival of the Prophet Solomon and his army as the ants kept watch outside the nest (Güneş, 2004). Upon reflection, the ants can assume that the Prophet Solomon and his army are larger creatures that would trample and destroy the ant population. Thus, the ant tries to escape from a danger collectively, as this instinct had been placed into the ants by Allah to preserve the colony's life. One lesson that can be learned from this event is that even a tiny insect has feelings of affinity for its kind; to be spared from destruction, together they seek refuge in their nest during challenging times (Ross, 1994). Although the ant's nest is not as strong, efforts to save the colony must be implemented without any reason for delay.

In this vein, the strategy of 'social distancing' is currently recommended to hinder the spread of the Covid-19 virus which includes the closure of workplaces and educational institutions, the avoidance of large gatherings, the quarantine of persons in contact with confirmed cases, the isolation of suspected or confirmed cases, the recommendation of staying at home, and even the mandatory quarantine or lock-down of certain residential areas and cities (Islam, Islam, & Adam, 2020).

v. Conduct Endeavours Based on Reason

Muslims need to realise and understand that nothing happens in heaven or on earth except by the will of Allah. When this fact is appreciated, it can create peace in a believer's heart. Of course, a Muslim should strive to avoid being infected by whatever effective means, including quarantining, maintaining personal hygiene, maintaining a balanced diet, social distancing as directed by the authorities, and medicinal treatment (Ahmad & Ahad, 2021). Allah recommends endeavours of spiritual healing through the verses of the Quran through His words in 17:82.

The interpretation of this verse explains that Allah sent down the Quran as a cure for ignorance, misguidance, eliminating severe diseases,

hypocrisy, deviation and polytheism. The Quran is a blessing to the believers who practice all the required obligations. Believers partake in what is lawful and reject what is forbidden. Then they enter Paradise and are delivered from Allah's divine punishment (al-Marāghī, 1946). Therefore, Islam has made it obligatory to treat patients by practising endeavours or *ikhtiyār* in close collaboration with *tawakkul* towards Allah. This proves the absolute conviction to the practice that no one can prevent, benefit or cause harm other than by His will. According to Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1393), one of the famous Sunni scholars of the Hanbali School of thought, *tawakkul* shows a heart that genuinely depends on Allah in obtaining benefits and rejecting harm in matters of this world and the hereafter, up to the smallest detail and the greatest extent of things (Ibn Rajab, 2001). Subsequently, to face the Covid-19 epidemic, efforts can be conducted as advised by the Prophet through a hadith narrated by Usāmah ibn Zaid (Nuryana & Fauzi, 2020). The Prophet (pbuh) once said, “[w]hen you hear the news of Plague in a place, then do not enter it, and if you are in the place where the Plague occurs, then do not go out of it.” (Narrated by al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ṭib, Bāb mā yudhkar fī al-ṭā‘ūn*, no. 5396).

Another effort that can be made is to recite the *al-Fātiḥah* with the sick or affected person. The advantages of the sura *al-Fātiḥah* can be derived from the incident of how a companion of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) named Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī had saved a village chief who was stung by a poisonous animal. Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī recited the *al-Fātiḥah* to treat the village chief, and with the permission of Allah, the patient was cured (al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ṭib, Bāb al-Ruqyā bi fātiḥat al-kitāb*, no. 5404).

vi. Mental Soothingness with Dhikr (remembrance of Allah)

In the Quran, there is a method of healing therapy for the heart, and through those, other diseases can be weathered. The words of Allah in 13:28 prescribes treatment of a weak heart with *dhikr*. Evidence of this discourse can be seen in relation to a weak heart disposition of a person (Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014; Hussein, 2018; Saniotis, 2018).

Dhikr, in terms of language, means to say and remember. While in terms of terminology, it means remembrance that is done to remember Allah to escape from negligence and forgetfulness of the heart by constantly feeling the presence of Allah in one's heart (Hooker, (2021;

al-Sakandarī, 1961). Thus, *dhikr* is the memory and presence of a strong and continuous heart praising and gravitating towards the divine meanings of Allah so that negligence is removed from the heart in ways that are allowed by Islamic law, such as through speech, deeds or with the heart (Abuali, 2020).

There are many verses of the Quran related to the call to always perform *dhikr* by remembering Allah (Geels, 1996). Among them are the words of Allah in 33:41 (Guemuesay, 2012). Al-Qurtubī (2006) interprets this verse by stating that Allah commands His servants to remember and be grateful to Him. Let them continue to practice and expand the practice because rewards will be bestowed upon them. Allah makes the matter (of remembrance and gratitude) as one without limits since it is easy to do by a servant and contains an even greater reward.

vii. Maintaining Cleanliness

Covid-19 has presented unprecedented health challenges across all strata in society worldwide. The Covid-19 experience has caused us to reflect on the quality of life, health and well-being and, just as important, the end of life (Roman, Mthembu, & Hoosen, 2020). During this time, cleanliness is a vital component to be practised and is encouraged by all respected authorities (Piwko, 2021). In Arabic, cleanliness refers to the word *al-naẓāfah*, which is purification (Ibn Manzūr, 2010). This cleanliness starts from the physicality of an individual to the cleanliness of the environment. From a health point of view, hygiene is one of the things that is highly emphasised. This includes self-care and care for the surrounding occupied area. Children and the elderly are more susceptible to diseases, especially with pandemics and viruses (She, Liu, & Liu, 2020).

Therefore, good hygiene needs to be given exposure, emphasis and practised by those of all walks of life. The scenario that occurred due to Covid-19 has shown significant changes to the community in Malaysia. Everyone begins to practice good hygiene by washing their hands regularly, keeping themselves from moving outside unnecessarily, and being in dirty places like markets until they can clean purchased items before being stored or cooked. This new norm is sure to significantly impact the community's health, with everyone ensuring that the area around them is clean and free of dirt (Awan, Shamim, & Ahn, 2020). Allah explicated in Quran, 8:11 about the falling of rain as a method of

purifying human beings. This verse proves that Allah sends rain from the sky to His servants to purify them from all impurities and sin. The same is true of removing oneself from Satan's temptations and his vices (al-Sa'dī, 2002). Therefore, if Muslims take the underlying wisdom of this Covid-19 pandemic, there is no problem in putting cleanliness as the primary act that needs to be implemented and maintained in daily life.

Conclusion

Pandemic outbreaks are not an odd or new phenomenon. The accounts of Islamic scholars prove that such events took place as early as the time of the Israelites. The Quran also reveals some debates about viruses, epidemics, and so on, although not in intricate detail. The verses of the Quran on these matters are found in Quran, 2:26, 243 & 249, 21:83 and others.

If Allah has destined that the entire world will be infected with the Covid-19 virus even after various efforts and endeavours, then humans could never stop it because humans are insignificant creatures. Although Covid-19 has caused various harms and even death, efforts can be made by choosing a vaccine as one of the cures to control the covid-19 disease so far, and in accordance with the demands of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (the objective and purpose of the Islamic law) which is to preserve life. As a result, the Covid-19 pandemic must be appreciated as a shower of mercy and love from Allah to His believers. In other words, if the disease persists, we believers remain confident of the great gift of forgiveness and rewards to come. Thus, the commitment of patience is also at stake in undergoing a period of quarantine and isolation quietly in our respective homes. Muslims are expressly advised to use the Quran as a guide in overcoming this pandemic. The Quran offers several essential notes to curb the spread of the Covid-19 virus, such as applying *tawakkul*, *tabayyun* on every news or information received, having patience, making home your haven, increasing remembrance towards Allah and maintaining one's cleanliness.

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In This Issue

Note from the Editor

Research Articles

Nurzali Ismail, Jasmine Mohamed Jawhar, Danial Mohd Yusuf, Anis Izzati Ismail & Raja Muhammad Khairul Akhtar Raja Mohd Naguib

Understanding Malaysian Youth's Social Media Practices and Their Attitude towards Violent Extremism

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