

The Pandemic and Its Mitigation Efforts in the Qur'an (A Study of Interpretation of Nawawī al-Bantanī in Tafsīr Marāḥ Labīdh)

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Abstract

This study comes from the wide and massive effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on almost all aspects of human life. The overreaction and various responses from society bring polemic in mitigation works that the number of infected patients by Covid-19 virus rise from time to time. Islam has paid attention to the problem of pandemics and epidemics, as explained in the Qur'an and Hadith. On the other hand, Indonesian Muslim society strongly favors the Qur'an as the primary source of life teaching and guidance. Therefore, the interpretation of Qur'anic verses related to pandemic mitigation in the book of Tafsīr Nusantara, that is, Tafsīr Marāḥ Labīdh written by Syaikh Nawawī al-Bantanī and its relevance in the present context. This qualitative study uses the inductive method and contextual approach to explain the interpretation. At last, this study infers some conclusions. First, Syaikh Nawawī sees pandemics and epidemics as the examination and test (*muṣībah*) from Allah SWT to all humankind. Second, Syaikh Nawawī explains that the Qur'ān orders humans to be alert to the coming pandemic and plague in the same manner as the act of facing the coming of enemies in war.

Keywords: *Pandemic, Mitigation, Tafsir Nusantara*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh dampak Covid-19 yang meluas ke seluruh aspek kehidupan masyarakat. Kecemasan berlebihan dan respons yang beragam memunculkan polemik dalam pelaksanaan upaya mitigasi sehingga angka kasus terinfeksi virus Covid-19 semakin melambung. Pada dasarnya, pandemi dan wabah penyakit sudah lama diperhatikan oleh agama Islam, sebagaimana terlihat dalam ayat-ayat al-Qur'an dan hadis Nabi Muhammad SAW. Di sisi lain, masyarakat Muslim Indonesia memiliki kecenderungan yang kuat terhadap al-Qur'an sebagai sumber ajaran dan tuntunan dalam kehidupan. Oleh karenanya, penafsiran atas ayat-ayat terkait mitigasi pandemi dalam kitab Tafsīr nusantara, yakni Tafsīr Marāḥ Labīdh karya Syaikh Nawawī al-Bantanī dan relevansinya dengan konteks kekinian menemukan urgensinya di masa kini. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif yang menggunakan metode induktif dengan pendekatan

interpretasi kontekstual untuk memahami penafsiran secara mendalam kemudian dilakukan generalisasi. Kajian ini menghasilkan beberapa kesimpulan sebagai berikut. Pertama, Syaikh Nawawī memandang serangan wabah atau pandemi sebagai sebuah ujian dan cobaan (muṣibah) yang diturunkan Allah SWT kepada umat manusia. Kedua, Syaikh Nawawī menjelaskan bahwa al-Qurʾān memerintahkan untuk bersikap waspada terhadap munculnya wabah, sebagaimana ketika menghadapi serangan musuh dalam peperangan.

Kata kunci: *Pandemi, Mitigasi, Tafsir Nusantara*

INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019, the world was shocked by the emergence of mysterious pneumonia first discovered in Wuhan, China. This disease is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), a member of the same family as the viruses that cause SARS and MERS. On 11 February 2020, WHO announced a new name for the pneumonia virus: Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). This virus originates from animals which then spreads to humans and transmits from humans to other humans so easily that its spread is difficult to contain. Therefore, WHO then changed the status of Covid-19 from a local epidemic to a pandemic¹. In Indonesia, the first positive case of Covid-19 was noticed on 2 March 2020 when it was confirmed that two people had contracted it from Japanese citizens.² A month after the emergence of this virus in Indonesia, the pandemic has spread to 34 provinces, with the highest spread rates in DKI Jakarta, West Java, and Central Java. At the end of July 2020, positive cases of Covid-19 in Indonesia ranked first in Southeast Asia with a total of 3,287,676 cases.

The Covid-19 pandemic that hit all countries in the world has significantly impacted various aspects of life. The high transmission rate of Covid-19 makes people's mobility weak, resulting in a sluggish economy. Indonesia has experienced an economic recession with marked minus gross domestic product in the third quarter of 2020 to 3.49 percent. On the other hand, the many cases of Covid-19 that have occurred in Indonesia have resulted in many doctors and other health workers becoming victims. The PB IDI Mitigation Team said that as of 28 November 2020, 180 doctors in Indonesia had died due to Covid-19. Apart from the health sector, in the education sector, learning cannot be carried out face-to-face because of fears of the risk of transmission. So

¹ Adityo Susilo et al., 'Coronavirus Disease 2019: Tinjauan Literatur Terkini', *Jurnal Penyakit Dalam Indonesia* 7, no. 1 (2020): 45.

² Many experts doubt this information because several neighboring countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have reported cases of Covid-19 since January. Likewise, Chinese citizens who returned to their home countries were confirmed to have contracted Covid-19 after vacationing in Bali. Look, Muhammad Beni Kurniawan, 'Politik Hukum Pemerintah Dalam Penanganan Pandemi Covid-19 Ditinjau Dari Perspektif Hak Asasi Atas Kesehatan', *Jurnal Ham*, no. 1 (2021): 38.

during this pandemic, learning is carried out online.³ Several religious holiday events could not be held, and places of worship had to be closed.

To mitigate this outbreak, the government has issued several strategic policies. Among them is the implementation of lockdown, PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions), and PPKM (Treatment of Restricting Community Activities) to minimize virus transmission, providing assistance to people in need, implementing health protocols, and administering vaccines free of charge.⁴ In addition, many educational and outreach efforts have been carried out so that the public is not infected with the Covid-19 virus through the official government website and announcements posted in easy-to-see spaces.⁵ Transmission cases are increasing sharply, and people must adapt and survive the new normal lifestyle. Apart from that, the uncertain situation, the news that was blown up by the media, and the maze of discourses and theories about the pandemic caused social panic. Various reactions emerged, ranging from those who became overly afraid to those who became ignorant of calls related to efforts to spread the Covid-19 virus. This situation makes mitigation efforts made by the government to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus ineffective.

Pandemics and outbreaks of infectious diseases have existed since ancient times. When the health sector had not progressed significantly, disease outbreaks were often seen as disturbances from spirits or a curse from God. Husnul Hakim explained that several verses of the Qur'an indicated an epidemic, namely the pestilence virus transmitted by camels to the Thamud people, water leeches from river water that the Children of Israel drank, and the smallpox virus that afflicted Abraha and his troops.⁶ In addition, pandemics and epidemics are part of reality that cannot be separated from human life. Before the Covid-19 pandemic at the end of 2019, the Justinianus Plague was a pandemic outbreak that attacked the Byzantine Empire in 541 AD. This plague was a bubonic plague from rats caused by the yersinia pestis bacterium. This disease has spread to almost all countries worldwide and claimed around 25 million lives. The same disease again struck

³ Rizqon Halal Syah Aji, Dampak Covid-19 pada Pendidikan di Indonesia: Sekolah, Keterampilan, dan Proses Pembelajaran, *Jurnal Sosial dan Budaya Syar'I*, no. 5 (2020): 396.

⁴ Putu Ayu Criselda Candra Gayatri Wibawa, KEBIJAKAN PEMERINTAH DALAM MENANGANI COVID 19, *Ganesha Civic Education Journal*, no. 1 (2021): 15.

⁵ The government's official website for dealing with the transmission of the Covid-19 virus, for example, covid19.go.id. Apart from this site, the government also provides a WhatsApp account with the number +62-811-3339-9000 as a means of communication to find out symptoms, case management, referral hospitals and other information related to the handling of Covid-19 and its developments. In addition, *pedulilindungi* application is provided with similar benefits, which can be downloaded on the Play Store. Retrived from covid19.go.id., accessed on 29 July 2021.

⁶ Husnul Hakim, 'Epidemi Dalam Alquran (Suatu Kajian Tafsir Maudhu'i Dengan Corak Ilmi)', *Jurnal Kordinat*, no. 1 (2018): 116.

the plains of Europe, Africa, and Asia in 1346-1353 AD, known as the black death plague. The yersinia pestis bacteria is transmitted from fleas and rats, which are estimated to kill 75-200 million people. This reality reminds humanity that a plague is a form of disaster that has the potential to appear at any time and threaten the safety of human life.⁷

Islam pays great attention to epidemics and efforts to deal with them. In the hadith, several histories are found related to mitigation measures to control the spread of the plague. One of them is the Prophet's words regarding leprosy,

وَقَالَ عَفَّانُ: حَدَّثَنَا سَلِيمُ بْنُ حَيَّانَ، حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ مِينَاءَ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
«لَا عَدْوَى وَلَا طَيْرَةَ، وَلَا هَامَةَ وَلَا صَفَرَ، وَفِرٌّ مِنَ الْمِجْدُومِ كَمَا تَفِرُّ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ»⁸

'Affān said: Salīm bin Ḥayyān said to us, Sa'īd bin Mīnā' said to us, "I heard Abū Hurairah say: 'Rasulullah SAW said: 'There is no contagious disease, there is no impact from thiyarah, there is no bad luck because of hammah birds, there is no bad luck in the month of Ṣafar, and run from leprosy like you run from a lion (Bukhari Hadith)

The hadith explains that the disease is not contagious by itself, except by the will of Allah. Even so, humans must try their best to protect themselves and those around them from contracting the plague. One of the efforts to protect oneself and others from the plague is to avoid it with the possible efforts following the facilities and advances available. Even so, the Prophet Muhammad SAW also reinforced Muslims to maintain mental health stability during epidemics and epidemics in an area.

وعن عائشة زوج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم انها اختبرته أنها سألت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن الطاعون فأخبرها النبي أنه كان عذابا يبعثه الله على من يشاء، فيجعله رحمة للمؤمنين فليس من عبد يقع الطاعون فيمكث في بلده صابرا يعلم انه لن يصيبه إلا ما كتب الله له إلا كان له مثل أجر الشهيد (رواه البخاري)⁹

'Aisyah asked the Prophet Muhammad SAW about tha'un (pestilence), so he replied: "indeed, the disease of tha'un is the punishment of Allah SWT, which is sent down to whoever He wills and makes the plague a blessing for the believers. For whoever remains in it patiently and believes that a disease will not befall anyone unless it has been ordained by Allah; (if he dies because of tha'un), then he is considered a martyr (Bukhari Hadith).

⁷ https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maut_Hitam, accessed on 3 September 2021

⁸ Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Beirut: Daar Thuq al-Najah, 1433 H, Juz 7, p. 126.

⁹ Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*,...Juz 4, p. 175.

The Qur'an does not explain the handling of epidemics in a clear and detailed manner. Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī describes it clearly in his commentary book, *Marāḥ Labīdh*. Shaykh Nawawī al-Bantanī explained one of the efforts that must be made in dealing with the plague implied in the verses of war. The interpretation of this writing is that war attacks by the enemy are analogous to attacks by disease outbreaks,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا خُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ فَانفِرُوا تُبَاتٍ أَوْ تَنْفِرُوا جَمِيعًا

O you who believe. Get ready, you guys, advance (to the battlefield) in groups, or advance together (simultaneously). (QS. An-Nisa: 71).

The interpretation of this verse, Shaykh Nawawī explained,

وَهَذِهِ آيَةٌ تَدُلُّ عَلَىٰ وُجُوبِ الْحَذْرِ عَنِ جَمِيعِ الْمَضَارِ الْمُظُنُّونَةِ

This verse shows the obligation to protect oneself from any danger that is thought to come. So that every danger, not only in a war attack whose enemy is visible but also in facing the danger of an epidemic that is not visible.

Moreover, it is believed to come (المضار المبيئنة) like a pandemic. Furthermore, Nawawī al-Bantanī explained,

كَانَ الْإِقْدَامُ عَلَى الْعِلَاجِ بِالذَّوَاءِ وَالْإِحْتِرَازُ عَنِ الْوَبَاءِ وَاجِبًا.

Therefore, treatment and protection from the plague are mandatory. In the current context, using the interpretation of Nawawī al-Bantanī, vaccination is not only permissible but also necessary. Seeing the tendency of the Indonesian Muslim community to be very attached to understanding verses of the Qur'an in their lives, interpretation of verses related to current social problems, especially regarding mitigation efforts in dealing with a pandemic, finds its urgency.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive method by analyzing several works and writings related to the focus of the study, either directly or indirectly. The works are read carefully and then analyzed and interpreted qualitatively according to the research problems previously determined. This research is library research.

Qualitative research involves a rich collection of data from various sources. Qualitative research collects data qualitatively, and the method of analysis is also primarily qualitative. This often involves an inductive exploration of the data to identify recurring themes, patterns, or concepts and then describing and interpreting those categories. In qualitative research, the data

collected qualitatively can also be analyzed quantitatively. This happens when the researcher first examines the qualitative data thoroughly to find the relevant themes and ideas and then converts them into numerical data for further comparison and evaluation.

DISCUSSION

Outbreak and Pandemic Disaster Mitigation Concept in Indonesia

Various pandemic outbreaks that hit countries in the world, including Indonesia, are global disasters that require the right strategy for handling and good cooperation between elements within a country, even between countries in the world. The government realizes that realizing the highest possible level of health for the people is one part of the national development goals.¹⁰ As regulated in Law no. 40 of 1991 concerning the Management of Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases, the control of outbreaks of infectious diseases is one of the efforts to achieve optimal health status for the entire community.¹¹

Article 1 (9) Law no. 24 of 2007 concerning Disaster Management, what is meant by mitigation is an effort to reduce disaster risk through physical development, awareness, and increased capacity to face the threat of disaster. With the mitigation paradigm, countermeasures are not reactive but preventive and proactive to minimize the risks of disasters and epidemics that hit (mitigation). In efforts to deal with disease outbreaks and pandemics, Yuen Kwong-yung, professor of infectious diseases at the University of Hong Kong, stated that the most important thing is the speed in disease control to limit the spread.¹²

The ideal outbreak control scenario is to carry out the right diagnostic tests, find a potent drug, and create a vaccine. Handling an ideal scenario will certainly take time, bearing in mind that not all diseases have known characteristics and allow outbreaks to spread uncontrollably. David Heyman from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine stated that the most important thing is to deal with outbreaks in ways that are well known. These practices include sound epidemiological studies and control of outbreaks by contact tracing, isolation of cases, monitoring contacts, and preventing entry into outbreak areas.¹³ So, the focus of mitigating the occurrence of an epidemic disaster is to limit transmission as soon as possible so that the outbreak does not spread.

¹⁰ Law No. 4 1984 concerning Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases, p. 1.

¹¹ Government Regulations No. 40 1991 Concerning the Prevention of Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases, p. 1.

¹² Meera Senthilingam, *Wabah dan Pandemi; dari Cacar sampai Coronavirus*, terj. Hera Andrayani, Jakarta: KPG, 2021, p. 28.

¹³ Meera Senthilingam, *Wabah dan Pandemi...p. 28.*

Guided by Law no. 4 of 1984 concerning Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases, the Indonesian government formulated several outbreak control measures. These countermeasures aim to reduce the death rate and limit the transmission and spread of the disease so that the plague does not spread to other areas. Some of these countermeasures are as follows.

First, epidemiological investigation. Epidemic mitigation efforts, this activity is intended to discover the factors that cause outbreaks, ways of transmission, and groups of people susceptible to infection and determine effective ways to deal with the transmission. This investigation was carried out by carrying out several activities, namely collecting population morbidity and mortality data, clinical, physical, and laboratory examinations, establishing a diagnosis, and observing residents and other living things and objects suspected of containing the cause of the plague.

Second, examination, treatment, care, and isolation of sufferers, including quarantine measures. Communities suspected of being exposed to an outbreak must receive examination and treatment following predetermined health standards while receiving quarantine measures. If the indications of infection are strong, isolation and treatment measures must be carried out as regulated by the local government, as well as tracing efforts for people who come into contact with the patient in the future to carry out a similar examination.

Third, prevention and remedies. This action is carried out by strictly enforcing health protocols, namely by constantly washing hands, using masks, and keeping a distance between one person and another so that crowds do not occur. In addition, prevention and immunity are also carried out by vaccinating groups of people who are most at risk of being exposed to an epidemic. Considering various considerations, vaccine administration can be carried out with or without the parties' approval.

Fourth, the elimination of disease causes. The cause of the disease in question is germs in the form of germs, viruses, and other microorganisms or certain objects that are the source of the disease. Destruction is carried out with due regard to environmental health and does not cause the spread of disease outbreaks.

Fifth, the handling of corpses due to the plague. Patients confirmed to have died from exposure to a disease outbreak must be treated according to the prescribed protocol to prevent transmission. The protocol is regulated by taking into account applicable social and religious norms taking into account health factors. This handling includes handling the bodies and removing pesticides from the tools used in handling the bodies.

Sixth, community outreach. Progress in tackling the epidemic can only be achieved if the community takes an active role. Community understanding of the importance of health protocols,

efforts to prevent epidemic transmission, immunization and vaccination, cooperation in handling outbreak patients, and epidemiological conditions, in general, are beneficial to the government and health workers in carrying out the planned response efforts. Therefore, this counseling must be carried out using all available mass media, both government and private, as well as print and electronic.

Seventh, other countermeasures were carried out by considering the epidemiological and socio-economic conditions of the community.

In practice, implementing efforts to control and mitigate outbreaks does not necessarily only become the government's responsibility as the policy maker. The success of this effort can only be carried out with good cooperation between elements in government, both in the health, economic, social, and political sectors, as well as the private sector, which in this case includes non-governmental organizations, community organizations, and society in general.

In Government Regulations No. 40 of 1991 concerning the Management of Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases, technically, it is explained that prevention efforts are the responsibility of the Minister in coordination with other Ministers and related agencies. The person in charge of operations at a Level II Region is the Regent/Mayor of the Municipality Head of the Level II Region, in this case, the Ministry of Health. At this level, the Head of the Health Department for the Level II Region cooperates with related agencies and is responsible to the Governor. In this case, the Head of the Level I Region is the Head of Health for the Level I Region.¹⁴

The participation of the community in mitigating this epidemic disaster is carried out in several forms. Namely, provide information if a victim is known to be exposed to a disease or indicated to be infected, assist the smooth implementation of epidemic control efforts in whatever form they can, both in the form of manpower, time, moral and material support, and others and provide awareness and motivation to other communities to participate in supporting efforts to overcome the epidemic.

Interpretation of Pandemic Verses and Their Mitigation Efforts in Tafsir Marāh Labīdh

Not all problems are described in the Qur'an explicitly and clearly, including discussions of pandemics or infectious diseases. Likewise, mitigation measures so that pandemic disasters and disease outbreaks can be overcome as early as possible and limit their spread significantly. Even so,

¹⁴ Government Regulations No. 40 1991..., p. 5.

hints about epidemics in the verses of the Qur'an are scattered in various discussion themes that require careful research to reveal them.

Epidemic is one of the bad events that befall humans, either caused by their actions or those that occur outside their control. Theologically, in the Qur'an bad events such as natural disasters, disease, poverty, ignorance, hunger, and others are expressed in terms *balā'* (بلاء), *muṣībah* (مصيبة), *fitnah* (فتنة), *'iqāb* (عقاب) and *aḏāb* (عذاب)¹⁵. The Qur'an narrates that the people of the previous prophets before the Prophet Muhammad SAW had experienced an outbreak of disease or epidemic.¹⁶ One of them was the Thamūd people who were affected by an epidemic due to violating the rules set by the Prophet Ṣāliḥ AS as explained in QS. Hud, 11: 61-68,

وَالِي تَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ قَالُوا يٰصَالِحُ قَدْ كُنْتَ فِينَا مَرْجُوًّا قَبْلَ هَذَا أَتَنْهَانَا أَنْ نَعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا وَإِنَّ لَنَا لَفِي شَكِّ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَبِّي وَآتَيْتُ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ عَصَيْتُهُ ۗ فَمَا تَزِيدُونَنِي غَيْرَ تَخْسِيرٍ وَيَقَوْمِ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَذُرُّوْهَا تَأْكُلُ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَبَأْخُذْكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيبٌ فَعَفَّوْهَا ففَقَالَ تَمَتَّعُوا فِي دَارِكُمْ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ذٰلِكَ وَعَدُوٌّ غَيْرٌ مَّكَذُوبٍ فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا صَالِحًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ ۗ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَمِنْ خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ وَأَخَذَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةَ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جُثَمِثًا كَانَ لِمَنْ يَعْزَمُ فِيهَا ۗ آلاَ إِنَّ تَمُودًا كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ ۗ آلاَ بَعْدًا لِّتَمُودَ ۗ

61. *Against the (people of) Samud (We sent) their brother, Saleh. He said, “O my people, worship Allah! There is no god for you but Him. He has created you from the earth (soil) and made you its prosperous. Therefore, ask Him for forgiveness, then repent to Him. Verily, my Lord is very near, Most Favorable (the prayer of His servant).”* 62. *They (the Samud) said, “O Saleh, before this, you were truly the one who was expected among us. Do you forbid us from worshipping what our ancestors worshiped? Verily, we are in disquieting doubts about what (religion) you call upon us.”* 63. *He (Saleh) said, “O my people, explain your opinion if I have clear evidence from my Lord and He gave me mercy (prophecy). Who will help me from (the punishment of) Allah if I disobey Him? You will never add anything to me but losses.* 64. *O my people, here is a she-*

¹⁵ M. Quraish Shihab, “Musibah dalam Perspektif al-Qur’an”, *Jurnal Studi al-Qur’an*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 2006, p. 8-17. Also look, KH. Muhadi Zainuddin, “Teologi Bencana dalam al-Qur’an”, *Jurnal UNISIA*, Vol. XXXV, No. 78, January 2013, p. 48-57.

¹⁶ Husnul Hakim, “Epidemi dalam al-Qur’an”, *Jurnal Koordinat*, Vol. XVII, No.1, April 2018, p. 116-127.

camel from Allah as a miracle for you. Therefore, let him eat in Allah's earth and do not treat him badly, which will cause you to be punished immediately." 65. Then they slaughtered the camel. So, he (Saleh) said, "Rejoice all of you in your homes for three days. 66. When Our decision came, We saved Saleh and those who believed in him by grace from Us, and (We saved him, too) from the humiliation that day. Truly your Lord, He is the Most Powerful, the Most Mighty. 67. A roaring sound also fell on the unjust people, so that they died in their homes. 68. (The country looks completely unmarked) as if they had never lived there. Remember, the Samud (people) have denied their Lord. Remember that the (people of) Samud have perished.

Tafsīr *Marāḥ Labīdh*, Syaikh Nawawī explains that this verse tells about the preaching of Prophet Saleh AS to his people, namely the Thamud people, to believe in Allah SWT. At that time, the Thamud people asked for proof of the Prophet Saleh's apostleship by removing a calf from a rock, so Allah SWT finally granted it. The camel was presented as a miracle, so Prophet Saleh AS required that the camel not be disturbed and not hurt and allowed to look for food in the pasture and drink water safely. Prophet Saleh AS had warned of disaster if they violated these rules. Shaykh Nawawī explained,

وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسُوءٍ أَيْ لَا تَضْرِبُوهَا وَلَا تَطْرُدُوهَا، وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ السُّوءِ فَيَأْخُذْكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيبٌ

Prophet Ṣāliḥ AS has explained clearly the rules related to the camel. In the interpretation above, Shaykh Nawawī explains that even so, the *Thamud* apparently ignored the rule and even slaughtered the camel and ate it.¹⁷ Because of their actions, the Prophet Saleh AS then insinuated their attitude that did not care about the threat of punishment,

فَقَالَ لَهُمْ صَالِحٌ بَعْدَ قَتْلِهِمْ لَهَا: تَمَتَّعُوا أَيَّ عَيْشٍ فِي دَارِكُمْ أَيَّ فِي بِلَادِكُمْ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ مِنَ الْعَقْرِ الْأَرْبَعَاءِ وَالْخَمِيسِ وَالْجُمُعَةِ، ثُمَّ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ فِي الْيَوْمِ الرَّابِعِ يَوْمَ السَّبْتِ .

The Prophet Ṣāliḥ AS said in a sarcastic tone, 'have fun for three days because, after that, the punishment will be inflicted.' In Tafsir, Shaykh Nawawī explains,

وَمَا عَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ أَنْذَرَهُمْ صَالِحٌ بِنَزُولِ الْعَذَابِ وَرَغِبَهُمْ فِي الْإِيمَانِ فَقَالُوا: يَا صَالِحُ وَمَا عِلْمُ الْعَذَابِ؟ فَقَالَ: تَصِيرُ وَجُوهَكُمْ فِي الْيَوْمِ الْأَوَّلِ: مَصْفَرَّةً، وَفِي الثَّانِي: مَحْمَرَّةً، وَفِي الثَّلَاثِ: مَسْوَدَةً، وَفِي الرَّابِعِ: يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ صَبِيحَتَهُ ذَلِكَ أَيَّ نَزُولِ الْعَذَابِ عَقِبَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ وَعَدُّ غَيْرِ مَكْدُوبٍ

¹⁷ Muhammad bin 'Amr Nawawi, *Marāḥ Labīḥ Likāsyfī Ma'na al-Qur'an al-Majīd*, (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1431 H) Juz 1, p. 511.

It was stated that within these three days, they experienced changes in the color of their facial skin, where on the first day, their facial skin turned yellowish, then reddish the next day, then blackened on the third day.¹⁸

Health experts understand this facial change as a plague of malignant disease before they are finally punished in the form of *ṣā'iqaḥ*,¹⁹ a deadly thunderous thunder,²⁰ *ṣaiḥab*,²¹ a deafeningly loud sound,²² and *rajfah*,²³ a very powerful earthquake.²⁴ Medical experts analyzed the acute illness that attacked them as a pestilence virus known as pestis hemorrhagic, transmitted by camels and threatening the lives of those exposed.²⁵

The various theological views used by scholars in assessing the epidemics that befall humans have led to a long debate about the existence of the recent pandemic. Even though the conception of trials and punishments has significant differences in characteristics, this does not make the Ulama uniform in viewing the nature of the various types of pandemic outbreaks that have hit the world. Some scholars consider the existence of a pandemic outbreak as punishment or punishment for tyrannical people who like to sin.²⁶ Even so, most scholars consider the pandemic a test and trial that Allah SWT has sent down to all humans, believers, and non-believers alike. Rationally, the second opinion looks stronger because those affected by the virus and infected by the pandemic are not only disbelievers and sinners but also pious people and even religious

¹⁸ Muhammad bin 'Amr Nawawi, *Marāḥ Labīz*... juz 1, p. 512.

¹⁹ Look Tafsir Syaikh Nawawi about QS. Fuṣṣilat, 41: 17,

وَأَمَّا تَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمَى عَلَى الْهُدَى، أَي وَأَمَّا قَوْمٌ صَالِحٌ فَبَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ طَرِيقَ الْخَيْرِ وَالشَّرِّ، فَاخْتَارُوا الدُّخُولَ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ عَلَى الدُّخُولِ فِي الرُّشْدِ. وَقَرَأَ الْجَمْهُورُ بَرَفَعِ «تَمُودُ» مَمْنُوعًا مِنَ الصَّرْفِ. وَقَرَأَ بِالنَّصْبِ بِفَعْلٍ يَفْسِرُهُ مَا بَعْدَهُ، وَقَرَأَهُ الْأَعْمَشُ وَابْنُ وَثَابٍ مَمْنُونًا فِي الْحَالِيزِ فِي الرَّفْعِ أَفْصَحَ لَوْ قُوعِ تَمُودَ بَعْدَ حَرْفِ الْإِبْتِدَاءِ. وَقَرَأَ «تَمُودُ» بِضَمِّ النَّاءِ، فَأَخَذَتْهُمْ صَاعِقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهُونِ أَي دَاهِيَةَ الْعَذَابِ الَّذِي يَهِينُهُمْ بِشِدَّتِهِ، بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

Muhammad bin 'Amr Nawawi, *Marāḥ Labīz*... juz 2, p. 361.

²⁰ Al-Raghib al-Ishfahani, *al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, t.th), p. 281.

²¹ Look Tafsir Syaikh Nawawi about QS. Al-Qamar, 54: 31,

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً صِيحَةً جَرِيلاً بِالْعَذَابِ بَعْدَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ مِنْ قَتْلِهِمُ النَّاقَةَ، لِأَنَّهُ كَانَ فِي يَوْمِ الثَّلَاثَةِ، وَنَزَلَ الْعَذَابُ بِالصَّيْحَةِ بِمِمْ كَانَ يَوْمَ السَّبْتِ، فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُخْتَطِرِ (31) بِكَسْرِ الظَّاءِ، أَي فَصَارُوا كَالشَّيْءِ الْيَاسِ مِنْ الْحَطْبِ وَالشُّوكِ لِمَنْ يَعْمَلُ الْحَطِيرَةَ فِي إِهْلَاكِهِمْ. وَقَرَأَ بِفَتْحِ الظَّاءِ أَي فَصَارُوا كَالشَّيْءِ الَّذِي دَاسَتْهُ الْغَنَمُ فِي الْحَطِيرَةِ، وَهِيَ زُرْبِيَّةُ الْغَنَمِ تَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دِقَاقِ الشَّجَرِ وَضَعِيفِ النَّبَاتِ تَقِيهَا عَنِ الْحَرِّ أَوْ الْبَرْدِ.

Muhammad bin 'Amr Nawawi, *Marāḥ Labīz*... juz 2, p. 472.

²² Al-Raghib al-Ishfahani, *al-Mufradat*... p. 289.

²³ Look Tafsir Syaikh Nawawi about QS. Al-A'raf, 7: 78,

فِإِنَّمْ كَذَبُوا صَالِحًا فِي قَوْلِهِ وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسُوءِ فَيَأْخُذْكُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فَأَخَذَتْهُمْ الرَّجْفَةُ أَي الزَّلْزَلَةُ الشَّدِيدَةُ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَالصَّيْحَةُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَاثِيَةً (78) أَي فَصَارُوا فِي بِلَدِهِمْ خَامِدِينَ مَوْتَى لَا يَتَحَرَّكُونَ. وَالْمَرَادُ كَوْنُهُمْ كَذَلِكَ عِنْدَ إِبْتِدَاءِ نَزْلِ الْعَذَابِ مِنْ غَيْرِ اضْطِرَابٍ وَلَا حَرَكَةٍ.

²⁴ Al-Raghib al-Ishfahani, *al-Mufradat*... p. 189.

²⁵ Ahmad Ramali, *Peraturan-Peraturan untuk Memelihara Kesehatan dalam Hukum Syara' Islam*, (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1968) p. 44.

²⁶ This statement was issued by UAS in a video entitled "Allah kirim tantara corona untuk melindungi muslim Uygur" on HajiNews TV's YouTube channel on Tuesday, February 11, 2020. Even so, UAS later clarified his statement and denied this. Look <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mHsVx8goTs>

scholars. Anyone who is negligent in taking care of himself and ignores health protocols will have the potential to catch the plague.

This logic is in accordance with Shaykh Nawawī's explanation of the nature of disaster in his Tafsir book, namely

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبَتْ آيَاتِكُمْ أَيُّهَا فَهِيَ بِسَبَبِ مَعَاصِيكُمْ الَّتِي اكْتَسَبْتُمُوهَا

The calamities or trials received by humans result from the bad deeds they have done. This meaning is that the provision of Allah SWT related to the disaster of a pandemic is in the context of the enactment of sunnatullāh law. If a person contracts a pandemic, it is almost certain that he is exposed to the virus from a carrier (a person who is indicated positive and carries the virus), either directly or through items touched by the carrier.

In terms of *naqli*, the opinion that a pandemic is a punishment and *'adhāb* for unbelievers and tyrants is not right. In the Qur'ān, it is explained that the plague passed down as an *'adhāb* has a special character that is only inflicted on the perpetrators of disobedience, and when an *'adhāb* is sent down, then those who believe will be protected by Allah SWT, as happened to the people of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ AS,

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا أَيُّ عَذَابِنَا نَجَّيْنَا صَالِحًا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَمِن خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ أَيُّ وَنَجَّيْنَا صَالِحًا وَالَّذِينَ

آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ النَّازِلِ بِقَوْمِهِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَمِنَ الْخِزْيِ الَّذِي لَرْمِهِمْ وَبَقِي الْعَيْبِ مَنْسُوبًا إِلَيْهِمْ²⁷

According to his interpretation, Shaykh Nawawī explained that when the punishment was passed down to the Thamūd people who slaughtered the Prophet Ṣāliḥ's camel, Allah SWT provided help and protection for the servant who was pious and believed in Allah SWT and the Prophet Ṣāliḥ AS.

The context of the events that occurred to the Thamūd at that time, *'adhāb* which was revealed to them, was preceded by a warning and a threat to those who are disobedient and do not believe in the treatise brought by the Prophet Ṣāliḥ AS. Therefore, Allah SWT's promise about punishment becomes real when lawlessness overtakes them. This situation is very different from the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the world a few years ago. In terms of objects affected by the pandemic virus, not only disobedient people but also many clerics and pious people have become victims. Not only are they seriously ill, but many have died.

On the side of warnings and threats, this did not happen during the pandemic that hit the people of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In the case of the Covid-19 pandemic, figures who argue

²⁷ Muhammad bin 'Amr Nawawī, *Marāḥ Labīz*... juz 1, p. 511-512

that the Covid-19 pandemic is *'adhab* base their arguments on the incidents of discrimination against Uyghur Muslims in China. It is associated with the emergence of the Covid-19 virus in a province in China as a punishment for the discriminatory treatment of Uyghur Muslims some time before. This kind of association is irrelevant because incidents of Muslim discrimination and more cruel massacres have also occurred in other Muslim groups outside of China, for example, what has happened to Muslims in Palestine for decades. If this is seen as the cause, then it would be more appropriate if the Covid-19 virus were passed down in Israel and America because of their tyranny towards Muslims in Palestine for a long period of time.

There is a hadith which confirms that Allah will not inflict punishment on the people of the Prophet Muhammad SAW as on the people of the previous prophets. This hadith is,

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُمَيَّرٍ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ مُمَيَّرٍ - وَاللَّفْظُ لَهُ - حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، حَدَّثَنَا عُمَرَانُ بْنُ حَكِيمٍ، أَحْمَرِي عَامِرُ بْنُ سَعْدٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَقْبَلَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ مِنَ الْعَالِيَةِ، حَتَّى إِذَا مَرَّ بِمَسْجِدِ بَنِي مُعَاوِيَةَ دَخَلَ فَرَكَعَ فِيهِ رَكَعَتَيْنِ، وَصَلَّيْنَا مَعَهُ، وَدَعَا رَبَّهُ طَوِيلًا، ثُمَّ انْصَرَفَ إِلَيْنَا، فَقَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " سَأَلْتُ رَبِّي ثَلَاثًا، فَأَعْطَانِي ثُنْتَيْنِ وَمَنْعَنِي وَاحِدَةً، سَأَلْتُ رَبِّي: أَنْ لَا يُهْلِكَ أُمَّتِي بِالسَّنَةِ فَأَعْطَانِيهَا، وَسَأَلْتُهُ أَنْ لَا يُهْلِكَ أُمَّتِي بِالْعَرَقِ فَأَعْطَانِيهَا، وَسَأَلْتُهُ أَنْ لَا يُجْعَلَ بِأَسْهُمٍ بَيْنَهُمْ فَمَنْعَنِيهَا " ²⁸

The hadith explains that the Prophet Muhammad SAW proposed three prayers for his people, namely first, that his people would not be afflicted with *'adhab* as had happened to the people of previous prophets; secondly so that Islam will always develop and not disappear until the end of time; third so that people do not conflict with each other and fight against each other. It was explained that Allah SWT granted the first two prayers but did not grant the last prayer.

The explanation above shows that the pandemic revealed to the people of the Prophet Muhammad SAW was a test and trial sent down by Allah SWT. As is characteristic of the nature of trials and disasters, the transmission is caused by human negligence in maintaining immunity and implementing health discipline that health workers have recommended. Muslims must also believe that the existence of a test in the form of a pandemic cannot be separated from the power and will of Allah SWT. Therefore, Muslims must be positive in dealing with it by believing that Allah gives the test to increase the degree of its people who are faithful and patient.

The purpose of the test is to forge humans, so they don't despair even though bad things happen to their mistakes, as well as to see the quality of their faith. For those who are patient and

²⁸ Muslim bin Hajjaj al-Naisaburi, *Shahih Muslim...*, juz 4, p. 2216.

trust in the provisions of Allah SWT, the test will be a medium for purifying the soul and increasing human status before Allah SWT.²⁹ This is linear with the statement in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW that a person who is patient with an illness and dies by it, is counted as a martyr,

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا، زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قَالَتْ: سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ الطَّاعُونَ، فَأَخْبَرَنِي «أَنَّ عَذَابَ يَبْعُثُهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ، وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ جَعَلَهُ رَحْمَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ، لَيْسَ مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَفْعُ الطَّاعُونَ، فَيَمُوتُ فِي بَلَدِهِ صَابِرًا مُحْتَسِبًا، يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا يُصِيبُهُ إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ، إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ شَهِيدٍ»³⁰

From 'Aisyah RA, the wife of Prophet Muhammad SAW, said: "I asked Rasulullah SAW about pestilence (tha'un), so he replied, 'Indeed, pestilence is a punishment Allah imposes on whoever he wants, and Allah makes it mercy for those who believe. Whoever is afflicted with pestilence and remains in his country while being patient and introspective and understands that no one will be afflicted with disease except by Allah's decree on him will be rewarded as a martyr'. (Bukhari Hadith).

Shaykh Nawawī also emphasized this when explaining the people who were considered martyrs, namely one of them who died from disease even though it was not during the plague season or after the end of the disease outbreak. People who go through this disease patiently and with the hope of the pleasure of Allah SWT, then when they die, they are among the martyrs.³¹

In the Qur'an, the test that Allah SWT sent down to humankind to test their faith is not only expressed in terms of *muṣībah* but also *balā'* and *fitnah*³². Although these three terms have similar meanings, they contain different meanings and have special characteristics from one another. As for the meaning of the word, *muṣībah* refers to bad things that happen to someone due to bad deeds or sins that have been committed, even if unintentionally. Therefore, the object of the disaster is a person who has committed a sin or mistake, as in QS. Al-Syura, 42: 30,

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

30. Whatever calamity befalls you is due to what your own hands have done, and (Allah) forgives many (of your mistakes).

²⁹ Muhammad bin 'Amr Nawawi, *Marah Labiz*... juz 1, p. 53.

³⁰ Muhammad bin Ismail bin Ibrahim al-Bukhari, *Shahih al-Bukhari*, (Beirut: Daar Thuq al-Najah, 1433 H) juz 4, p. 175.

³¹ Muhammad bin 'Amr Nawawi, *Nibayatu al-Zain Fi Irsyadil Mubtadiin*, (Beirut: Daar al-Fikr, 1431 H), p. 160.

³² See in M. Quraish Shihab, "Musibah dalam Perspektif al-Qur'an", *Jurnal Studi al-Qur'an*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 2006, p. 8-17. Also look, KH. Muhadi Zainuddin, "Teologi Bencana dalam al-Qur'an", *Jurnal UNISIA*, Vol. XXXV, No. 78, January 2013, p. 48-57.

Shaykh Nawawī explains the interpretation of this verse by stating that the bad things that happen to humans are the result of their actions,

أي فهي بسبب معاصيكم التي اكتسبتموها, والمعنى: والذي أصابكم من الأحوال المكروهة وقع بما كسبت أيديكم³³,

Even so, Shaykh Nawawī stressed that not all bad deeds and sins would be rewarded in the world with calamities. Some of them get forgiveness from Allah, the Most Forgiving. It is like Tafsīr Syaikh Nawawī toward the closing verse,

وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ (30) من الذنوب فإن الذنوب قسمان: قسم يعجل العقوبة عليه في الدنيا بالمصائب، وقسم يعفو عنه وهو أكثر³⁴

Orders to Be Prepared for a Pandemic

A pandemic, as a plague disaster that has hit humanity in the world, requires great effort from all parties to deal with it. In the event of an outbreak of disease that occurred during the time of Rasulullah SAW and friends, efforts to deal with it have also been carried out by carrying out strategic steps as described in many hadiths, one of which is the following hadith

وَعَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ: سَمِعَ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، بَعْدَ يَوْمٍ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «لَا يُوردَنَّ مُرَضٌ عَلَى مُصِحٍّ»³⁵

The Prophet Muhammad SAW said: "Do not mix the sick with the healthy." (Bukhari and Muslim Hadith from Abu Hurairah)

This reality shows Muslims that being vigilant and making efforts to deal with disease outbreaks is a must. It cannot be denied with a fatalistic belief because Rasulullah SAW has practiced it himself and ordered his people and followers to.

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مَسْلَمَةَ بْنِ مَعْمَرٍ، وَفُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، قَالَا: أَخْبَرَنَا الْمُغِيرَةُ وَنَسَبُهُ ابْنُ فَعَنْبٍ، فَقَالَ ابْنُ عَبْدِ

الرَّحْمَنِ الْقُرَشِيُّ: عَنْ أَبِي النَّضْرِ، عَنْ عَامِرِ بْنِ سَعْدِ بْنِ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ، عَنْ أُسَامَةَ بْنِ زَيْدٍ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى

اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «الطَّاعُونَ آيَةُ الرَّجْزِ، ابْتَلَى اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِهِ نَاسًا مِنْ عِبَادِهِ، فَإِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ، فَلَا تَدْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِ،

وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا، فَلَا تَفْرُوا مِنْهُ» هَذَا حَدِيثُ الْمُعَنِّيِّ وَفُتَيْبَةَ نَحْوَهُ³⁶

³³ Muhammad bin 'Amr Nawawi, *Tafsir Marah Labidz...*, juz 2, p. 374-375.

³⁴ Muhammad bin 'Amr Nawawi, *Tafsir Marah Labidz...*, juz 2, p. 375.

³⁵ Muhammad bin Isma'il al-Bukhari, *Shahih Bukhari...*, juz 7, p. 138.

³⁶ Muslim bin Hajjaj al-Naisaburi, *Shahih Muslim...*, juz 4, p. 1737. Also see in Muhammad bin Isma'il al-Bukhari, *Shahih Bukhari...*, juz 7, p. 130.

The Prophet Muhammad SAW said: “Tha’un (infectious disease outbreak) is a warning from Allah SWT to test His servants from among humans. So if you hear that the plague is spreading in a country, do not enter that country. And if the disease spreads in the land where you are, do not flee from it either.”

The support for the propositions of *‘aqli* and *naqli* from the hadith shows the necessity of a positive reaction to the plague test that befalls humanity by making efforts, as exemplified by Allah SWT.

In the Qur’an, a similar command is not expressed in an explicit editorial as the description in the hadith above. Much of the concern of the Qur’an is the encouragement to be vigilant against the threat of war. Regarding pandemics and disease outbreaks, the verses of the Qur’an discuss a lot from the theological side and the lessons from the events that happened to the earlier people. Even so, Shaykh Nawawī contextually interprets the command to be alert to war with vigilance for other possible dangers. Bearing in mind that a wave of plague can come with great danger as an enemy attack, analogize the order to be prepared for the arrival of the enemy in the war with the order to be prepared for attacks from epidemics and pandemics.

وَحُدُّوا حُدُورَكُمْ أَيَّ احْتَرَزُوا مِنَ الْعَدُوِّ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ لِئَلَّا يَهْجَمُوا عَلَيْكُمْ. وهذه الآية تدل على وجوب الحذر عن جميع المضار المظنونة، وبهذا الطريق كان الإقدام على العلاج بالدواء والاحتراز عن الوباء وعن الجلوس تحت الجدار المائل واجبا والله أعلم³⁷.

Alertness to the presence of an epidemic is interpreted as a determination to seek healing with medicine, prepare for the arrival of an epidemic, and avoid other life-threatening dangers.

In his interpretation of the command to be alert to the threat of an epidemic, Shaykh Nawawī emphasizes determination in seeking healing and avoiding transmission of the plague. This statement provides an implicit explanation to remove all doubts and fears about the possibility of violating God’s destiny and provisions. Shaykh Nawawī wants to emphasize that to carry out efforts to mitigate the dangers of a pandemic. There is an emphasis that such efforts are in no way part of violating the provisions of Allah SWT. On the other hand, because this is ordered by Allah SWT in the Qur’an, carrying it out is part of the obligation.

In addition to the commands implicit in the Qur’an to carry out mitigation efforts in dealing with a pandemic, clearer and more direct details of instructions were given by the Prophet Muhammad in hadiths such as those mentioned above. The existence of these hadiths serves as an

³⁷ Muhammad bin ‘Amr Nawawī, *Marāh Labīz*... juz 1, p. 222-223.

explanation and detail of the order to be prepared for outbreaks and pandemics. In addition, in a hadith about disease and medicine, the Prophet Muhammad explained,

حَدَّثَنَا هَارُونُ بْنُ مَعْرُوفٍ، وَأَبُو الطَّاهِرِ، وَأَحْمَدُ بْنُ عِيسَى، قَالُوا: حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ وَهْبٍ، أَخْبَرَنِي عَمْرُو وَهُوَ ابْنُ الْحَارِثِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ رَبِّهِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ، عَنْ أَبِي الزُّبَيْرِ، عَنْ جَابِرٍ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: «لِكُلِّ دَاءٍ دَوَاءٌ، فَإِذَا أُصِيبَ دَوَاءُ الدَّاءِ بَرَأَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ»³⁸

Have told us Hārūn bin Ma'rūf and Abū Al-Ṭābir and Aḥmad bin 'Isa they said; Has told us Ibn Wabb; Has informed me 'Amru, namely Ibn al-Harith from 'Abdu Rabbih bin Sa'id from Abu Azz Zubair from Jabir from Rasulullah shallallahu' alaihi wasallam, he said: "Every disease has a cure. If the right medicine is found for a disease, the disease will heal with Allah azza wajalla permission." (Bukhari Hadith Number 851)

Explaining that every disease has a cure, it can indirectly be understood that the Prophet Muhammad SAW ordered his people to seek treatment when an illness struck them. Likewise, taking preventive measures when it is known that there is a potential for outbreaks and pandemics. It is the same as the actions of humans who eat when they are hungry or drink when they are thirsty and work to earn a living to anticipate the needs of life in the days ahead.

So that it can be said that treatment and vigilance and taking preventive measures in efforts to mitigate outbreaks and pandemics are not at all contrary to the concept of tawakkal. On the contrary, these efforts are a form of spiritual endeavor humans can do in facing life's trials and tribulations. After all the endeavors that have been made in dealing with epidemics and pandemics, what must be done next is trust and hope for the pleasure of Allah SWT.

Pandemic Mitigation in the Qur'an and Its Actualization in the Contemporary Context

The endeavor to protect the soul is part of the worship that must be carried out by humankind, especially if it relates to the souls of many people. The study of ushul fiqh, protection of the soul, is one of the objectives of the existence of the shari'ah, which Allah SWT revealed to humankind (maqāṣid al-syarī'ah)³⁹. Therefore, rules were born

³⁸ Muslim bin Hajjaj al-Naisaburi, *Shahih Muslim*..., juz 4, p. 1729.

³⁹ Imam al-Ghazali explained that maqāṣid is a goal that becomes the basis for one's actions implemented in a tangible form. Theoretically, maqāṣid al-syarī'ah is explained as, مقصود الشرع من الخلق خمسة وهو ان يحفظ عليهم دينهم ونفسهم وعقلهم ونسلهم ومالهم. The point is that the objectives of the Shari'ah are of five kinds, namely protecting religion, soul, mind, lineage and wealth. See in Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *al-Mustasfa min 'Ilm al-Uṣūl*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, t.th) Juz 1, p. 287. Also see in Abd al-Rahman Ibrahim al-Kailani, *Qawa'id al-Maqasid 'inda al-Imam al-Syathibi; 'Ardlan wa Dirasatan wa Tablilan*, (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr, 2000), p. 45.

in the form of commands and prohibitions to realize protection for the soul and other aspects in maqāṣid al-syarī'ah.

This concept of thinking provides reinforcement and affirmation of Shaykh Nawawī's interpretation of QS. Al-Nisa, 4: 101, which explains the order to be prepared in the face of war, also means an order to be alert and take precautions when it is known that there is danger and an epidemic that will attack.

وَحُدُّوا حُدُورَكُمْ أَيِ احْتَرِزُوا مِنَ الْعَدُوِّ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ لئَلَّا يَهْجَمُوا عَلَيْكُمْ. وهذه الآية تدل على وجوب الحذر عن جميع المضار المظنونة، وبهذا الطريق كان الإقدام على العلاج بالدواء والاحتراز عن الوباء وعن الجلوس تحت الجدار المائل واجبا والله أعلم⁴⁰.

Among the similarities between the two commandments is their purpose relating to protecting human souls. Thus, humanity must make every effort to confront and drive away enemies that threaten the safety of the soul (عليكم احترازوا من العدو ما استطعتم لئلا يهجموا), both enemies in the form of humans in the context of war or enemies in the form of diseases in the context of epidemics and pandemics. So, it is very clear that the interpretation of the verse raises an understanding that in the context of the current Covid-19 pandemic, which is attacking all citizens worldwide, making all efforts to mitigate it is necessary. Shaykh Nawawī emphasized this in the continuation of his description and interpretation that seeking healing and avoiding the transmission of viruses and diseases is mandatory.

Furthermore, handling pandemics worldwide, including in Indonesia, requires the cooperation of all parties, the community, health workers, and the government as the policymakers. Given the rapid spread of viruses and diseases, just going all out will not be enough. More than that, good management and planning are needed as the right strategy so that the virus does not spread further, and the number of victims can be minimized.

Explaining Tafsir QS. Al-Nisa, 4: 71, Shaykh Nawawī outlines several strategies. It is an order to remove the weapons used to fight the pandemic.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا حُدُّوا حُدُورَكُمْ أَيِ خذوا سلاحكم

Suppose the context of fighting a pandemic is to prevent transmission. In that case, the weapons needed are personal protective equipment (PPE), masks, hand sanitizers, vitamins, and nutritious

⁴⁰ Muhammad bin 'Amr Nawawī, *Marāb Labīz*... juz 1, p. 222-223.

food to maintain body immunity, exercise in moderation, and calm the heart and soul by putting your trust in Allah SWT.

The following strategy continues the interpretation of QS. Al-Nisa, 4: 101 is

واحترزوا من العدو

Which is textually interpreted as *taking precautions against enemy attacks*. Shaykh Nawawī's interpretation contains an order to take preventive action if it is known that a disease or pandemic is coming. In dealing with a pandemic attack, the main focus is to limit the spread of the virus and its transmission as quickly as possible.⁴¹ In conclusion, the number of patients can be kept to a minimum, as well as the death rate due to exposure to the virus.

In Indonesia, the strategy taken by the government based on Law no. 40 of 1991 concerning the Prevention of Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases is to provide the widest possible socialization about the pandemic, types of viruses, transmission, symptoms, risks, and health protocols that must be carried out by all parties as well as treatment protocols if indications of contracting the virus are found. In addition to open access to information, the government has taken strategic policies to prevent transmissions, such as limiting community interactions and strict health protocol rules. Meanwhile, residents exposed to the virus must carry out independent isolation to avoid transmitting the virus to others or be referred to a recommended hospital as soon as possible. These policies are not explained in detail by the Qur'an. In contrast, the Qur'an only provides global guidelines, while some details can be found in the hadith, for example, the following hadith,

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنِ ابْنِ شَهَابٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍ - أَنَّ عُمَرَ خَرَجَ إِلَى الشَّامِ، فَلَمَّا كَانَ بِسَرِغَ بَلَغَهُ أَنَّ الْوَبَاءَ قَدْ وَقَعَ بِالشَّامِ - فَأَخْبَرَهُ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ عَوْفٍ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: «إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَا تَقْدَمُوا عَلَيْهَا، وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا، فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا فِرَارًا مِنْهُ»⁴²

Umar bin Khattab RA journey to Sham. When he arrived at Sargh, Umar received news that a plague was befalling the Sham region. Abdurrahman bin Auf told Umar that Rasulullah SAW once said, 'If you hear of an epidemic in an area, then don't enter it. But if an epidemic occurs in your area, don't leave that place.'

⁴¹ As the opinion of Yuen Kwong-yung, professor of infectious diseases at the University of Hong Kong. See in Meera Senthilingam, *Wabah dan Pandemi*:... p. 28.

⁴² Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*,... Juz 7, p. 130.

Shaykh Nawawī then emphasized that prevention efforts should not be carried out individually without empowering others (ولا تمكنوه من أنفسكم). If it is understood contextually in a pandemic situation, certain parties cannot carry out prevention efforts alone, for example, health workers or the government. However, cooperation is needed with all parties, both governmental, non-governmental, and individuals.

For the mitigation strategy to work properly, managerial efforts are needed to regulate and empower all existing members according to their capacities. Shaykh Nawawī interprets the continuation of the verse with the following explanation,

فَانْفُرُوا ثُبَاتٍ أَيْ اهْضُوا إِلَى قِتَالِ عَدُوِّكُمْ وَاحْرَجُوا لِلْحَرْبِ جَمَاعَاتٍ مَتَفَرِّقَةً سَرِيَّةً بَعْدَ سَرِيَّةٍ أَوْ انْفُرُوا جَمِيعًا .

Namely, rise all of you to fight your enemies and go out in battle, separately in units of troops, so that the existing manpower can be maximized under different conditions. However, it can also be deployed to move forward together *أَوْ انْفُرُوا جَمِيعًا*, if circumstances become urgent. As in Syaikh Nawawī's interpretation, it certainly applies in the context of fighting physical enemies and visible enemies, such as disease attacks.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak several years ago, the government formed the Covid-19 Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling (GTPP). This task force is an autonomous body with the task of leading, planning, organizing, implementing, coordinating, and reporting activities to accelerate the handling of Covid-19. Carrying out the task force, it is assisted by a secretariat based at the National Disaster Management Agency. In addition, this task force was also formed in each region by the respective mayors and governors to carry out tasks related to accelerating the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In handling Covid-19, the central task force consisting of several ministries and task forces in the regions up to the village level and assisted by other parties work together to carry out strategic steps. The focus of this strategic step is to anticipate the escalation of the spread of Covid-19 and treat patients exposed to Covid-19. More than that, the efforts are also directed at dealing with the widespread impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Indonesia's economic, social and educational sectors. With this task force, all Indonesian citizens are expected to work together to comply with health protocols and government policies taken to deal with the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. This reality teaches humanity to always be vigilant in facing the threat of a pandemic outbreak that may occur anytime and anywhere.

CONCLUSION

Several core points can be drawn based on the descriptions put forward in the previous chapters. The results of this research will be summarized as follows. First, in terms of the interpretation that Shaykh Nawawī has carried out in his book *Marāh Labīz*, it can be concluded that Shaykh Nawawī views plague or pandemic attacks as a test and trial (*muṣībah*) that Allah SWT sent down to humankind because they had done things that caused these trials to come. This test was sent down with the aim of forging people not to despair even though bad things happen to their mistakes and to see the quality of their faith. For those who are patient and surrender to Allah's provisions, the test will be a medium for purifying the soul and increasing human degrees before Allah SWT. Therefore, because the exam is intended as a form of evaluation, doing your best to deal with outbreaks and pandemics is necessary. Humans must exert all their resources and efforts to prevent widespread transmission of the virus as soon as possible before the epidemic spreads and to seek an appropriate and effective healing process for those exposed to the virus. This kind of plague incident never happened during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW as said by the Prophet in a hadith about *tha'un* and was once practiced by Umar bin Khattab when he was about to enter the area of Sham, which was affected by the plague. In the Qur'an, the command to be alert and try to take precautions is found in verses of war. In his interpretation, Shaykh Nawawī explained that this alert order also applies to enemy attacks in the form of other predicted dangers (المضار (المظنونة), including disease or epidemic. It was concluded that mitigating efforts against a pandemic is a must for humankind and found its instructions in the Qur'an, as explained by Shaykh Nawawī in his interpretations.

Second, in the *Tafsīr Marāh Labīz*, Shaykh Nawawī explained that the order to be alert and take preventive action in dealing with an outbreak or pandemic mitigation includes various stages of business, namely those carried out before the outbreak strikes through preventive actions and after. In the Indonesian context, the mitigation efforts taken by the government are based on Law no. 4 of 1984 concerning Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases and Law no. 40 of 1991 concerning the Management of Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases. Of the two laws, the government took strategic actions including, (1) epidemiological investigation, (2) examination, treatment, care, and isolation of sufferers, including quarantine measures, (3) Prevention and immunity, (4) Elimination of causes of disease, (5) Handling of corpses due to epidemics, (6) Counseling to the public, (7) Other countermeasures carried out taking into account the epidemiological conditions and socio-economic conditions of the community.

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