

Disease Control Plan: Reading Communicable Illness in the Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

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Introduction:

The World Health Organization (WHO) has outlined 11 indicators in their 2021 Strategic Preparation and Response Plan (SPRP) to combat the pandemic. Since the year 2020, Covid 19 has been observed. Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) found in kitāb al-mardhā and kitāb al-ṭibb of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī showcase approaches and principles of modern epidemiology-based solutions. This is shown in comparison to Islamic tradition. Delve deeper into the setting of communicable illness in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī; we found that although the epidemiology study as a different set of knowledge yet to exist in the time of the prophet, the general guidelines provided by the prophetic revelation stand through the test of time proving that this is not indeed the mundane human talking instead it is indeed the divine guidance.

When we talk about disease control plan, moving to the modern-day phase of epidemiology, although the initial plan was laid out by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in various ḥadīth, this paper also benefits the source from the World Health Organization (WHO) in the form of a document named Strategic preparedness and response plan (SPRP). This response plan contains some of the most critical mechanisms to combat COVID 19 on a global scale. As the title suggests, this paper also attempted to build a sort of disease control plan with two unified sources as an effort to minimize the gap that exists between Islamic knowledge and so-called worldly science wisdom.

Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP)

Covid 19 Strategic preparedness and response plan is a document highlighting eleven pillars or indicators that act as guidance to the WHO members based on updated statistics and the situation of managing Covid earlier at the beginning of the pandemic. These pillars are also seemingly a support system for the affected nation, and the implementation of these plans was left to decide respective countries depending on their economic and social situation.

The eleven pillars of SPRP can be contextualised or summarised as critical points of the overall plans to successfully manage and control the covid 19. The pillar can be categorised into two main themes:

supervise the potential threat of unrestrained rise of covid case while the research and development of “warhead” against covid 19. ¹ The pillar that falls under the first theme is as follows:

Coordination, Planning and Coordination, Operational Support Logistics and supply chain and Surveillance, epidemiological investigation. Contact tracing and adjustment of public health. social measures and point of entry, international travel and transport, and mass gathering Infection prevention and control, protection of health workers Case management, Clinical Operation, and therapeutics. Maintaining essential health services and systems.

The pillar that falls under the second theme is as follows: Research and innovation Laboratories and Diagnostic

Vaccination Link up to this document comes up the Strategic preparedness and response plan Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, which specifically aim to monitor the implementation of SPRP on global, national, and sub-national level based on the previous pillars. The objective of the monitoring and evaluation framework is to:

Suppress transmission Reduce exposure Counter misinformation and disinformation Protect the vulnerable Reduce deaths and illness Accelerate equitable access to new tools.²

Among the eleven pillars of SPRP, four of them were directly aligned to some of the ḥadīth in Bukhārī. The connection will be discussed later in the paper. Besides that, the objective mentioned above was also considered tied directly to prophetic tradition, especially in the book of Al-Mardhā and Tibb. The debrief on how the objective was linked to ḥadīth will follow shortly after explaining the pillar.

Ḥadīth Al-Bukhārī in contemporary epidemiology perspectives.

As previously mentioned before, there are certain hadith in Kitāb Al – Mardhā and Kitāb At-Tibb in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī were matched by latest epidemiology study. In this section, we going to attempt to inquire into some of Bukhārī chapter naming or Tarjamat Al Bukhārī influencing ḥadīth below the chapter name and corresponding pillar of SPRP as a representation of interconnected knowledge.

In the first ḥadīth in the book of Al-Tibb, Chapter of “There is no disease except its treatment”, ḥadīth

¹ World Health Organization (WHO). 2021. “COVID-19 strategic preparedness and response plan: Monitoring and evaluation framework”. *COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP 2021)*. <https://www.who.int/publications>. p.2.

² Ibid p.1.

narrated by Abu Huraira, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ . رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ . عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ دَاءً إِلَّا أَنْزَلَ لَهُ شِفَاءً

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment³. Al Bukhārī named this chapter based on the first hadith listed in this chapter to emphasis the importance of finding cure in whatever disease infected upon human. In this hadith, the prophet promises us that whatever disease that were inflicted upon us, there must be some medicine or remedy to counter the illness. In the famous *Irsyād As-sārī* by Al-Qasthālānī, he cites the ḥadīth extension narrated by Ibn Masu'd and recorded by An – Nasāi', which states that the prophet instructed the companion to seek treatment for their illness⁴. Ibn Hajar, in his renowned masterpiece, *Fatḥul Bārī*, also brings up the issue of tawakkal from his own point of view, stating that Muslims must view this brilliant hadith from a broader perspective, even though doctors of his time have confirmed that certain diseases are seemingly incurable. In the capacity of human knowledge, there are diseases for which no cure has yet been discovered, and some have tried and failed to find a cure; however, in the end, it is Allah's judgement that determines whether treatments for diseases are effective.⁵

Moving into SPRP guideline from World Health Organization (WHO), this ḥadīth interestingly in line with Vaccination. The COVID-19 vaccines are an essential tool for halting the pandemic, but they cannot do so by themselves. Public health and social measures such as surveillance, contact tracing, isolation, and individual protective behaviors such as staying at least 1 meter away from other people, wearing a properly fitted mask over your nose and mouth, avoiding poorly ventilated places and settings, staying at home if ill, covering coughs, and frequently washing your hands remain essential for breaking the transmission chain.⁶ Some people claim that you cannot take the vaccine because it contains prohibited substances such as swine, but the facts indicate otherwise. Muslims who refuse

³ Bukhari. n.d. *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*. (Internet). Kitāb At-Tibb. Bāb ma anzalallah dāan illa anzala lahu syifaā'n. #5678. <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5678>

⁴ Shihāb Ad-Din Abu Abbas Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Abu Bakr Al-Qasthālānī. 1903. *Irshād As-Sārī li Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*. Egypt:Muthabaah Al-Kubra Al-Amiriyyah. Vol 8. p.360.

⁵ Shihāb Ad-Din Aḥmad bin A'li bin Hajar Al-Asqalānī. 2013. *Fatḥul Bari Bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*. Ar-Risalah Al-A'lamiyah. Vol.17. p.417.

⁶ 'Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): Vaccines', accessed 12 August 2022, [https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/coronavirus-disease-\(covid-19\)-vaccines](https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-vaccines).

COVID-19 vaccinations may be violating Sharia law. Nevertheless, Halal certification is merely one of numerous factors that may affect vaccine uptake. The anti-vaccination movement, concerns regarding long-term side effects, accessibility, and misinformation present additional obstacles. Achieving vaccination goals will require effective scientific discourse and communication, including regular engagement with Islamic law scholars and national regulatory agencies.⁷ Even though the vaccine contains Haram, in an unprecedented situation such as a pandemic, it is permissible to consume them in a limited amount to save lives, which is more important. The Quran also clearly highlighted this issue in the verse:

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ بِهِ لغيرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

173. He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.⁸

One of the most common and effective ways to stop the spread of communicable diseases is to put people in quarantine. The first known use of the term dates all the way back to the year 1377, when the Rector of the Seaport of Ragusa officially issued an isolation period of 30 days for ships and 40 days for travellers on land.⁹ Nevertheless, in an interesting turn of events, such a precaution was described in the Şahîḥ Bukhārī in the book of Al-Tibb in the chapter of "What has been mentioned about the Plague" :

يُحَدِّثُ سَعْدًا عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا، وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا ". فَقُلْتُ أَنْتَ سَمِعْتَهُ يُحَدِّثُ سَعْدًا وَلَا يُنْكِرُهُ قَالَ نَعَمْ.

Narrated by Saad: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "If you hear of an outbreak of plague in a land, do not enter

⁷ Yan Mardian et al., 'Sharia (Islamic Law) Perspectives of COVID-19 Vaccines', *Frontiers in Tropical Diseases* 2 (20 December 2021): 788188, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fitd.2021.788188>.

⁸ Al-Quran. Al-Baqarah 2:173

⁹ Gian Franco Gensini, Magdi H. Yacoub, and Andrea A. Conti, 'The Concept of Quarantine in History: From Plague to SARS', *Journal of Infection* 49, no. 4 (1 November 2004): 257–61, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jinf.2004.03.002>.

it; but if the plague breaks out in a place while you are in it, do not leave that place."¹⁰

Ibn Hajar, during his conversation about this ḥadīth, had collectively explained this along with the well-known and lengthy ḥadīth of Umar instructing the army that was entering Sham while there was a significant plague taking place there. Ibn Hajar came to the definitive conclusion that there are three circumstances that are excusable and three that are not excusable in relation to the permission to leave the infested land. The first is that it is forbidden for residents of the land to leave to avoid contracting the disease; this option is available to them. The second scenario, in which a traveller was in the process of making his way to a different region that is home to him and the plague struck at a transit area, was one in which the traveller's departure from the land was justified. The third possible scenario involves a local resident who was forced to flee the area for some reason and is now contemplating going on vacation while the plague ravages his hometown. The validity of this scenario is up for debate.¹¹

In the realm of Tibb Nabawi, the plague section of Suyutī's prophetic medicine interpreted the ḥadīth in a manner distinct from Ibn Hajar's interpretation. The prophet's command has two benefits, one of which is that healthy people will not inhale infectious and lethal air or contract the plague. The second is that no one will approach the afflicted individual, thereby increasing the severity of the disease. As for the final portion of the hadith, "if it occurs in the land, do not flee," this is crucial because if a plague ravages a nation, it will weaken all bodies and influence them.¹²

To return to the recommendation made by the WHO, which makes use of the pillars of social measurement and points of entry, international travel and transportation, and gatherings of a large number of people. Within the context of this pillar, the World Health Organization (WHO) suggests that state members implement additional health measures within the time frame of forty-eight hours, such as denying entry, delaying departure, or delaying international travel. They also address this issue in an interim guidance document, the purpose of which is to evaluate the extent to which state member actions of risk assessment have been taken, and to inform the WHO of each state's mitigation plan in accordance with that evaluation.

In addition, the SPRP was implemented during the pandemic and included surveillance,

¹⁰ Bukhari. n.d. *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*. (Internet). Kitāb At-Tibb . Bāb ma yudzkaru fī at-tāuūn. #5728
<https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5728>

¹¹ Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalānī. 2013. *Fathul Bārī*. Vol 17. p.516

¹² Cyril Elgood. 1962. *Tibb-ul-Nabbi or Medicine of the Prophet*. n.pl. Saint Catherine Press. Vol.14. p.150.

epidemiological investigation, contact tracing, as well as adjustments to public health and social measures. The monitoring of cases of Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) or Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) in conjunction with Covid testing and report timing is an indicator that falls under this pillar. In the course of this action, 125 countries will be reporting their surveillance of respiratory illness on a weekly basis to the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS). This system has been used in the past to assess and monitor diseases related to influenza all over the world, and it is now being incorporated into a system to combat Sars-Cov-2.¹³

Besides that, Guidelines on Infection Prevention and Control (Ipc) Measures in Managing Person Under Surveillance (Pus), Suspected, Probable or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) issued by the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) in February 2022 include standard precautions such as hand hygiene, wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), disinfection and sterilisation, environmental hygiene, and waste management. This is to ensure that the healthy individual does not contract COVID 19. In addition, the MOH should ensure that the confirmed case of COVID 19 can be placed in one room per one metre of physical distance, and that Persons Under Surveillance (PUS) or close contacts are isolated. This is also similar to the previously mentioned concept of quarantine.¹⁴

On top of that, through the chapter of No Adwa in Kitab At-Tibb, a hadith narrated by Abu Huraira, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) said:

أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " لَا عَدْوَى " . قَالَ أَبُو سَلَمَةَ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " لَا تُورِدُوا الْمُمْرِضَ عَلَى الْمُصِحِّ " . وَعَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي سِنَانُ بْنُ أَبِي سِنَانَ الدُّؤَلِيُّ، أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ . رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ . قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " لَا عَدْوَى " . فَقَامَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ فَقَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ الْإِبِلَ تَكُونُ فِي الرِّمَالِ أَمْثَالَ الطَّبَّاءِ فَيَأْتِيهِ الْبَعِيرُ الْأَجْرَبُ فَتَجْرُبُ . قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " فَمَنْ أَعْدَى الْأَوَّلَ " .

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "No 'Adwa." Abu Huraira also said: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The cattle suffering from a disease should not be mixed up with healthy cattle (or said, "Do

¹³ WHO. COVID-19 strategic preparedness and response plan: Monitoring and evaluation framework. 2021 p.16.

¹⁴ Ministry of Health Malaysia. February 2022. *Guidelines On Infection Prevention And Control (Ipc) Measures In Managing Person Under Surveillance (Pus), Suspected, Probable Or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19)*. n.pl. p.6-22

not put a patient with a healthy person as a precaution.") Abu Huraira also said: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "No 'Adwa." A Bedouin got up and said, "Don't you see how camels on the sand look like deer but when a mangy camel mixes with them, they all get infected with mange?" On that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Then who conveyed the (mange) disease to the first camel?"¹⁵

Al-Qasthalānī commented this hadith on his famous *Irshād As-Sārī* that when the unknown Bedouin raise the question that when an infectious camel come in contact with healthy camel, it become sick as well. Does this mean the infectious disease does exist? For this question, the prophet said: "Then who conveyed the (mange) disease to the first camel?" meaning that He had everything happened according to Sunnatullah or Taqḍīr that has been set from the very beginning.¹⁶ Allah said in the Quran:

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلٍ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

22. No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy¹⁷

Therefore, in the beginning of the ḥadīth, the prophet said there is no A'dwa involving only the disease by itself infecting others. Even someone infected with virus, they cannot affect other just by disease alone but just as we mentioned above, it is indeed with the divine intervention.

Conclusion

In conclusion, although the term "epidemiology" did not exist during the time of the prophet, a general precaution was already in place during the time of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). The existence of such hadith is also evidence that humans have always confronted ostensibly fatal disease throughout the millennia and that we must always be prepared for this in the future. Even though modern medicine does not always align with sharia knowledge, we cannot ignore its necessity. Recent COVID-19 vaccine, for example, had unquestionably helped reduce the number of cases significantly, and we are now returning to the pre-pandemic norm. In the past century, the coexistence of medical and Islamic knowledge has been widely acknowledged. This knowledge twin should not be segregated, and both medical and religious studies students should have at least considered the principle. Last but

¹⁵ Bukhārī. n.d. *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*. (Internet). Kitāb At-Tibb. Bāb Lā ā'dwā. #5773-5775. <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5773-5775>

¹⁶ Al-Qasthālānī. *Irshād As-Sārī li Sharḥ Al-Bukhārī*. Vol 8. p.412.

¹⁷ Al-Quran Al-Hadid 57:22

not least, the Muslim should be the world leader in the medical field. With the two holy scriptures that our Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) left behind, we should discover more and find the hidden gem between Allah's words and Prophet Muhammad's own words.