



THE LEGACY INSTITUTE

مَوْسِسَّةُ التُّرَاثِ الْإِسْلَامِيِّ

Prophetic Guidance on Epidemic Disease: Coronavirus 2020

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to all those who may suffer from ailment, some alone, who may think they have no one to turn. When one has God, one has everything.

To all those who passed in our tradition and left a legacy, to the righteous from the plague of 'Amawas and to our world who is in need of curing the plagues of the heart more than the sickness of the limbs.

Acknowledgment & Thanks

To my ever-supporting wife who is always there for me and listened to drafts of this work and gave me feedback with her watchful attention to fine detail, I owe always a thanks that cannot be repaid.

To our parents and grandparents whose prayers are a means of protection from the Almighty.

To Salman Awan and Hamzah Raza for their generous time in overlooking the work for corrections.

Most importantly, all thanks & praise to the Almighty who we turn to for acceptance, repentance, and blessings... may He accept it with sincerity, make it beneficial to those that read it, and with it descend on Ummat Muhammad and the world His mercy and guidance. Amin

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah who decrees sickness and grants cure, who tests in order to give and cleanses until all that is left is pure.

Who grants will to the weak and sees how the strong will use their faculties to help those in need, thereby helping to cure their greed, and all are examined in order to see who is best in deed.

He created us and fashioned us from clay so we are never deceived by our strength and remember our fragility. He sends universal signs that encompass the world so we remember the collective connection we have from the Divine to humanity.

He gives life to the dead and revives hearts with His remembrance. Those who know Him are the richest, while those who may be perceived the wealthiest yet heedless of Him are truly the poor and lost in misguidance.

No doubt sickness is a test and a sign from the signs of God.

Purification

Sickness is a sign of purification in Islam, when the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him would enter the home of a sick person to visit, he would say, "**(La ba's, Tahurun In sha' Allah) No harm, it is purification, if Allah wills.**"¹ He said, "**the example of the believer, when he is afflicted by illness or fever, is that of a piece of iron placed in fire; its defects vanish and its good remains.**"² He said, "**Visit the sick. Follow funeral processions. Remind yourselves of the next life.**"³ Read the kindness of the Beloved Messenger who heard that a woman in his community was sick, asked about her, and her absence was noticed for him to seek to visit her, offer his prayers, and give her comforting words and presence. Umm al-Ala said, The Messenger of Allah ﷺ visited me while I was sick. He said: **Be glad, Umm al-Ala', Allah removes the sins of a Muslim for their illness as fire removes the defects of gold and silver.**"⁴ And the Beloved said, "**No calamity befalls a Muslim except that Allah removes sins from them because of it, even if it they were pricked by a thorn.**"⁵

¹ Ibn Abbas, Bukhari 5332 -

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ . رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا . أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ دَخَلَ عَلَى مَرِيضٍ يَغُودُهُ قَالَ لَا بَأْسَ ظُهُورٌ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ . فَقَالَ لَهُ " لَا بَأْسَ ظُهُورٌ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ " . قَالَ قُلْتَ ظُهُورٌ كَلَّا بَلْ هِيَ حُمَى تَقُورُ . أَوْ تُنَوَّرُ . عَلَى شَيْخٍ كَبِيرٍ ، تُرْبِزُهُ الْقُبُورُ . فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " فَتَعَمَّ إِذَا " .

² AbdulRahman ibn Azhar, Sunan Al Bayhaqi 6544 -

عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَزْهَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِ حِينَ يُصِيبُهُ الْوَعَكُ أَوْ الْحُمَى كَمَثَلِ حَدِيدَةٍ تَدْخُلُ النَّارَ فَيَذْهَبُ حَبَّتُهَا وَيَبْقَى طَيِّبُهَا

³ Sa'id, Adab Al Mufrad 518 -

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: عُوذُوا بِالْمَرِيضِ، وَاتَّبِعُوا الْجَنَائِزَ، تَذَكَّرْكُمْ الْآخِرَةَ

⁴ Umm Al Ala, Abu Dawud 3092 -

عَنْ أُمِّ الْعَلَاءِ، قَالَتْ عَادَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَنَا مَرِيضَةٌ فَقَالَ " أَبْثِرِي يَا أُمَّ الْعَلَاءِ فَإِنَّ مَرَضَ الْمُسْلِمِ يُذْهِبُ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَطَايَاهُ كَمَا تَذْهِبُ النَّارُ حَبَّتِ الدَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ "

⁵ Aishah, Bukhari 5640 -

عَائِشَةَ . رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا . رُوجَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " مَا مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ تُصِيبُ الْمُسْلِمَ إِلَّا كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا عَنْهُ، حَتَّى السَّوَكَةَ يُشَاكَهَا "

Oppression and Sin

Although, sickness in a land can be purification, it can also be a sign of God's displeasure due to sin or oppression. Abu Bakr Al Siddiq (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "O you people! You recite this verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَن ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ ۗ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

'O believers! You are accountable only for yourselves. It will not harm you if someone chooses to deviate—as long as you are 'rightly' guided. To Allah you will all return, and He will inform you of what you used to do.' (5:105) But I have heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying: **"When people see an oppressor but do not prevent them (from their oppression and evil), it is likely that Allah will encompass them all with a punishment."**⁶ God ultimately judges every person that is afflicted based on their own intentions. Any person afflicted should have good suspicion of their Lord. They should also hold their own soul accountable. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "An army will raid the Ka'bah and when it reaches a desert land all of them will be swallowed up by the earth." Aishah asked; "O Messenger of Allah! Why all of them?" He answered, **"All of them will be swallowed by the earth but they will be raised for Judgement according to their intentions."**⁷ Aisha said she asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about plagues and he said, **"It is a punishment that Allah sends upon whoever He wills, but Allah has made it a mercy for believers. Any servant who resides in a land afflicted by plague, remains patient and hoping for reward from Allah, knowing that nothing will befall them except what Allah has decreed, will be given the reward of a martyr."**⁸

Realities

Sickness, and more specifically epidemics, brings about a sense of anxiety. The sense of the unknown afflicting sickness on us may give many feelings of uncertainty and some even helplessness. It is in these times that we build emotional and spiritual resilience. Among the beliefs core to our faith, which our faith is founded on, is believing that nothing befalls a person except that is the will of God and has divine purpose even if we may not understand it. God has purpose and wisdom that we may perceive, and some cases we may not. Yet our faith is ingrained in the ultimate trust we have that all is from Him and He is the Almighty, All wise.

⁶ Abu Bakr, Abu Dawud 4338 -

عن أبي بكر الصديق، رضي الله عنه ، قال: يا أيها الناس إنكم لتقرءون هذه الآية: {يا أيها الذين آمنوا عليكم أنفسكم لا يضركم من ضل إذا اهتديتم} (المائدة : 105)) وإني سمعت رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم، يقول: "إن الناس إذا رأوا الظالم فلم يأخذوا على يديه أوشك أن يعمهم الله بعقاب منه"

⁷ Aishah, Bukhari 2118 -

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ. رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " يَغْرُو جَنِيثُ الْكَغَبَةِ، فَإِذَا كَانُوا بِبَيْدَاءٍ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يُخَسَفُ بِأَوْلِيهِمْ وَأَخْرِيهِمْ ". قَالَتْ " قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُخَسَفُ بِأَوْلِيهِمْ وَأَخْرِيهِمْ، وَفِيهِمْ أَسْوَأُهُمْ وَمَنْ لَيْسَ مِنْهُمْ. قَالَ " يُخَسَفُ بِأَوْلِيهِمْ وَأَخْرِيهِمْ، ثُمَّ يُبْعَثُونَ عَلَى نِيَّاتِهِمْ "

⁸ Aishah, Bukhari 5734 -

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، رُوجَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهَا أَخْبَرَتْ أَنَّهَا سَأَلَتْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ الطَّاعُونَ فَأَخْبَرَهَا نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " أَنَّهُ كَانَ عَدَا بَا يُبْعَثُهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ، فَجَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ رَحْمَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ، فَلَيْسَ مِنْ عَبْدٍ يَقَعُ الطَّاعُونَ فَيَمُوتُ فِي بَلَدِهِ صَابِرًا، يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُصِيبَهُ إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ، إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ الشَّهِيدِ "

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ

He is the Supreme Master over His creatures, the All Wise, the All Aware.

Quran 6:18

هُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ ۖ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمْ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ

He reigns supreme over all of His creation, and sends recording-angels, watching over you. When death comes to any of you, Our angels take their soul, never neglecting their duty.

Quran 6:61

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

No calamity befalls anyone except with Allah's permission. And whoever has faith in Allah, He will rightly guide their hearts through adversity. And Allah has perfect knowledge of all things.

Quran 64:11

Even though we may not understand all the wisdoms behind adversity, hardships, universal change, and moments of struggle – in their passing we witness our need to the Almighty and the reality of our neglect. The neglect of the soul. The neglect of its attachment to the Divine. Not that we necessarily need difficulty to learn, but it helps to reflect of some of its wisdoms as no one is saved from hardship, but we are all in need of faith to overcome them.

Moments of difficulty teach us empathy. A person who has gone through strife can empathize even more personally with someone worse than them. In these moments we witness acts of compassion and service to humanity that we draw lessons from and binds us that only faith can teach us. The power of sacrifice is strongest when one has little to give, but in that moment, gives for the benefit of another, these are lessons taught to us by the Divine and His Beloved. The selfishness of humanity dwindles when they are collectively weak and learn that their only solution is turning to one another and calling to the One that binds them.

In reality we learn that the true preparation we need is a spiritual one. The washing and purification we need is of the heart. The quarantine we need is quarantining our ego, desires, and addiction to sins.

Faith teaches us that the most desperate times – teach us more about our vulnerability and true selves.

We watched as many of us were told, there is a temporary ban from going to the most sacred and holiest of places, Makkah and Madinah. Yes, a sign of faith is not only being sad at not being able to visit, but how many of us asked if the spirit of the sacred rests in our hearts? Does the sanctity of God found in the Ka'bah in Makkah rest as well in our chest? Does the love, peace, tranquility, and solace we find in City of our Beloved and following his way concern us just as much?

We may reflect on the temporary ban, but may we never be banned from the mercy of God.

May we never be withheld from the visitation of Our Beloved Prophet, by following his example and embodying his message that he was sent as a mercy to all creation.

May we never feel so attached to this world that we cling to it fighting over its dirt, when to the dirt is our final return.

Plans may have changed, money has been lost, but true faith prepares you for this kind of adversity, it doesn't necessarily remove it.

In loss of wealth especially you will see the mark of a believer. Everything given or taken is from the Most High, Most Giving, and Most Appreciative. If you feel loss now, think of the one who has nothing. Being thankful in times of struggle, makes it easier to do so in enrichment.

Our Beloved said, **"Be mindful of Allah and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, then ask Allah; and if you seek help, then seek help from Allah. And know that if the nations were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they would not benefit you except with what Allah had already prescribed for you. And if they were to gather together to harm you with anything, they would not harm you except with what Allah had already prescribed against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried."** And he said, **"Be mindful of Allah, and you will find Him in front of you. Recognize and acknowledge Allah in times of ease and prosperity, and He will remember you in times of adversity. And know that what has passed you by [and you have failed to attain] was not going to befall you, and what has befallen you was not going to pass you by. And know that victory comes with patience, relief with affliction, and hardship with ease."**⁹

⁹ Tirmidhi 2516 and AlNawawi 40 Hadith 19 -

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: "كُنْتُ خَلَفْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَوْمًا، فَقَالَ: يَا غُلَامُ! إِنِّي أَعَلَّمُكَ كَيْمَاتٍ: اخْفِظِ اللَّهَ يَحْفَظْكَ، اخْفِظِ اللَّهَ تَجِدْهُ تُجَاهَكَ، إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعْنَيْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ، وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوِ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَنْفَعُوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَنْفَعُوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ لَكَ، وَإِنْ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَضُرُّوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ؛ رُفِعَتْ الْأَقْلَامُ، وَجُفَّتِ الصُّحُفُ".
رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ [رقم: 2516] وَقَالَ: حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ. وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ غَيْرِ التِّرْمِذِيِّ: "اخْفِظِ اللَّهَ تَجِدْهُ أَمَامَكَ، تَعَرَّفْ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِي الرَّخَاءِ يَغْرِفْكَ فِي الشَّدَّةِ، وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ مَا أَخْطَأَكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُصِيبَكَ، وَمَا أَصَابَكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُخْطِئَكَ، وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ النَّصْرَ مَعَ الصَّبْرِ، وَأَنَّ الْفَرْجَ مَعَ الْكَرْبِ، وَأَنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا"

Divine Wisdoms: Is Coranvirus a mark of punishment on China in particular? What about others it affects?

First and foremost, no person can define why God has sent on humanity affliction, why He has chosen one oppressor to send affliction and not another. These are the wisdoms of God.

As for epidemic disease being sent, it is a form of divine punishment as is any divine form of encompassing punishment as marked by the hadith of the Prophet peace be on him and the statement of Abu Bakr mentioned previously.

Allah describes sending on oppressors a specific type of torment called *Rijz* – an agonizing/painful torment that encompasses many. The Prophet peace be on him said, “*Ta’un* (plague or epidemic disease) is the sign of a *rijz* (painful torment, encompassing calamity) with which Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, tests people from among His servants. When you hear about it, don't enter there, and when it has broken out in a land and you are there, then don't run away from it.”¹⁰ *Rijz* is mentioned 10 times in the Quran. Allah says,

وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْا فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعَاجِزِينَ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّن رَّجْزٍ أَلِيمٍ

As for those who strive against Our signs, trying to defeat them, it is they who will be afflicted with *Rijz* ‘the painful torment, calamity’ of agonizing pain.

Quran 34:5

The verse refers to those who became enemies of God and fought with all of their might committing oppression with impunity and perceived unaccountability. God said he will afflict them with a painful and agonizing *Rijz*. *Rijz* itself has a number of meanings in the Quran depending on the context, and can mean painful punishment, anger of God, plan, etc. But in this reference specifically, of oppressors committing crimes and genocide, Allah would send on them *Rijz*. Allah said,

وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ لَئِن كَشَفْتَ عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

They would say, whenever a *Rijz* (plague, epidemic disease) struck them, ‘Moses, pray to your Lord for us by virtue of the promise He has made to you: if you relieve us of the plague, we will believe you and let the Children of Israel go with you,’

Quran 7:134

Sa'id Ibn Jubair and others mentioned that *Rijz* refers to *Ta’un* – plague, or epidemic disease, that encompasses them.¹¹ And the Prophet peace be on him said, “*Ta’un* (plague, epidemic disease) is *rijz* (calamity) of punishment, He punished with those who came before you.”¹²

¹⁰ Usama ibn Zaid, Muslim 2218 -

عَنْ أُسَامَةَ بْنِ زَيْدٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " الطَّلَاعُونَ آيَةُ الرِّجْزِ ابْتَلَى اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِهِ نَاسًا مِنْ عِبَادِهِ فَإِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ فَلَا تَدْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِ وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضِي وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَفِرُّوا مِنْهُ "

¹¹ Tafsir Ibn Abu Hatim (d.327 H), Al'Araf 7:134, Tafsir Ibn Kathir (d.774 H) 2:59

¹² Ibn Kathir 2:59, Narrated from Ibn Abu Hatim and others -

عن سعد بن مالك وأسامة بن زيد وحزيمة بن ثابت رضي الله عنهم قالوا: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم الطاعون رجز عذاب عذب من كان قبلكم

China has no doubt committed grave oppressions against Muslim and Non-Muslim alike. The millions in concentration camps, the forced conversions, forced marriages, rapes, torture, destruction of masjids, force separation between families and parents and children, and the full gauntlet of faith suppression is only a fraction of what has been reported that shows the reality against the Uyghur genocide. Among the wisdoms of God as mentioned by the Prophetic hadith that it is undoubtedly divine retribution. The Most Truthful and Trusted told us this: Aisha said she asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about plagues and he said, **"It is a punishment that Allah sends upon whoever he wills, but Allah has made it a mercy for believers..."**

Is plague punishment for everyone? Why is it considered punishment for the oppressions of China and not others?

The hadith of the Prophet peace be on him refers to a clear distinction of how scholars viewed plagues.¹³

Among Universal Wisdoms applicable to different people:

1. Punishment – to oppressors and those who reject
2. Sign – of reflecting over the universal power of the Almighty and returning to Him
3. Blessing and Mercy – as the Prophet said, it is a mercy for believers
4. Cause – their time and date they were destined to pass away has come and this was a cause, if it wasn't the Corona virus it would have been something else.

Furthermore, this goes into the realm of Islamic theodicy that explains the levels at which a servant of God understands an affliction. Either it is:

1. Elevation – a test in which God raises the status of those whom He loves.
2. Purification – of sins that were committed and it is better for them that they are cleansed in this life than the next
3. Affliction – punishment for sins and rejection
4. Or Reflection – of signs delivered to a person to come back to their Lord.

We don't have a universal reading of a prophetic statement which clearly depends on the person and condition of the person being afflicted. Only God judges individuals and the exact wisdoms for why they are afflicted are specific to them. The aforementioned hadith again highlights the universal wisdoms we have mentioned and types of afflictions a person holds themselves accountable for. All are raised and accorded their own intention. Aishah asked, "O Messenger of Allah! Why all of them?" He answered, **"All of them will be swallowed by the earth but they will be raised for Judgement according to their intentions."**

¹³ As mentioned by Zakariya AlAnsari, Tuhfat AlRaghibin fi Bayan Amr AlTawa'in 3- فارجز والرجس هنا بمعنى الطاعون وهو إنما يكون عذاباً على الكافر وإن رحمة وشهادة للمسلم

“Will we perish while there are righteous people among us?”

And it’s from among God’s universal principles that even if this punishment were to befall it could encompass others based on the intentions and wisdoms as mentioned above and it doesn’t differentiate between believer, nonbeliever, innocent, or oppressor. And Allah says,

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

Beware of a trial **that will not only affect** the wrongdoers among you. And know that Allah is severe in punishment.

Quran 8:25

Rather it’s incumbent on every believer to take the means necessary to protect themselves from it, medically, physically, and preventative measures for themselves and others.

With that being said the divine wisdoms of an affliction encompassing people is mentioned by Zaynab bint Jahsh may Allah be pleased with her who reported that the Prophet, peace be on him came out one day to her in a state of fear and said: “La ilaha illa Allah (i.e. None is truly worthy of worship but Allah). Woe to the Arabs from of an imminent evil that will strike. Today an opening of this size has been made in the barrier restraining Ya’juj and Ma’juj (Gog and Magog).” And he made a circle with his thumb and index finger. **Zaynab said, “O Messenger of Allah, will we perish while there are righteous people among us?” He replied: “Yes, if wickedness spreads, prevails.”**¹⁴

The overarching reality of divine decree that is mentioned in these hadith, of an epidemic, that may strike the world at once, and groups of people in particular – are from among the signs of God that He sends to creation. Signs of the reality of the pervasive hand God has over His creation, that oppressors cannot escape His grasp, and that to Him belongs all dominion and to Him is final return. Ultimately the wisdom of God transcends the limited scope of our view of understanding and only the Almighty has perfect essence in His wisdom, sublime in His decree, and subtle in His effect. These are just some wisdoms enumerated from our Divine texts and others include wisdoms such as protecting you from something even greater, or a wakeup call to reflect on one’s own mortality and turn to God, and simply awareness of not spreading disease through better hygiene. God says these are our signs, so let them reflect.

The Muslim philosophy of dealing with hardships then is to reflect over the universal wisdoms and ask oneself “what can I do?” rather than questioning an unseen paradigm and justifying being paralyzed by one’s own theological misgivings, “why did God do?”

¹⁴ Bukhari 3598, Muslim 2880 -

عَنْ زَيْنَبِ بِنْتِ جَحْشٍ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اسْتَيْقِظَ مِنْ نَوْمِهِ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ " لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَنِلٌ لِلْعَرَبِ مِنْ شَرِّ قَدِ افْتَرَبَ فُتِيحَ الْيَوْمِ مِنْ رَدْمِ "يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مِثْلُ هَذِهِ " . وَعَقَدَ سُفْيَانُ بِيَدَيْهِ عَشْرَةَ . قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَنْهَلِكُ وَفِينَا الصَّالِحُونَ قَالَ " نَعَمْ إِذَا كَثُرَ الْخَبِيثُ

The Fiqh of Epidemics and Plague

The question of “what we can do?” is discussed among the scholars of Islam in the chapters dealing with plague.

The words for a sickness that encompasses and spreads or epidemic in divine texts, the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet peace be on him, are **Ta’un** or **Waba’**.

Sometimes these words are used interchangeably and other times they refer to a specific type of epidemic disease, diseases that are similar to pestilence or plague.

Iyad said, Ta’un refers to [specific type of sickness, pestilence or the well known plague] which is known for its boils that cover the body, and Waba’ refers to generally all (epidemic) sickness. Waba’ is referred to as Ta’un because of its likeness in leading to death, otherwise every Ta’un is Waba’, but not every Waba’ is a Ta’un.¹⁵

In short, Ta’un is often used interchangeably with Waba’ in divine texts as a general epidemic disease that leads to death – and in some specific contexts Ta’un refers to diseases that are like the well-known pestilence, or plague.

This difference between Ta’un and Waba’ is important when discussing specific hadiths as they refer to them in light of the context used.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I saw (in a dream) a dreary-dark woman with unkempt hair going out of Madinah and settling at Mahai'a. I interpreted that as (a symbol of) the **Waba’** (sickness, epidemic) of Madinah being transferred to Mahai'a, meaning, Al-Juhfa."¹⁶ Here the Prophet peace be on him was referring to Waba’ – specifically the Malaria and Influenza that existed in Madinah and it was known for making people sick and the city was rife with it to the extent both of the Prophet peace be on him’s parents

قال عياض: أصل الطاعون القروح الخارجية من الجسد، والوباء عموم الأمراض؛ فسميت طاعونا لشبهها بها في الهلاك، وإلا فكل طاعون وباء¹⁵ وليس كل وباء طاعونا

More from Ibn Al Qayyim:

الطاعون - من حيث اللغة - نوع من الوباء، قاله صاحب "الصحاح" وهو عند أهل الطب: ورم رديء قتال يخرج معه تلهب شديد مؤلم جدا يتجاوز المقدار في ذلك، ويصير ما حوله في الأكثر أسود أو أخضر، أو أكمد ويثول أمره إلى التقرح سريعا. وفي الأكثر يحدث في ثلاثة مواضع في الإبط وخلف الأذن والأرنبة وفي اللحوم الرخوة. وفي أثر عن عائشة أنها قالت للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: «الطعن قد عرفناه، فما الطاعون؟ قال: (غدة كغدة البعير «يخرج في المراق والإبط

والتحقيق أن بين الوباء والطاعون عموما وخصوصا فكل طاعون وباء، وليس كل وباء طاعونا، وكذلك الأمراض العامة أعم من الطاعون فإنه واحد منها، والطواعين خراجات وقروح وأورام رديئة حادثة في المواضع المتقدم ذكرها

قلت: هذه القروح والأورام والجراحات هي آثار الطاعون وليست نفسه، ولكن الأطباء لما لم تدرك منه إلا الأثر الظاهر جعلوه نفس الطاعون. والطاعون يعبر به عن ثلاثة أمور: أحدها: هذا الأثر الظاهر، وهو الذي ذكره الأطباء. والثاني: الموت الحادث عنه، وهو المراد بالحديث الصحيح في الثالث: السبب الفاعل لهذا الداء، وقد ورد في الحديث الصحيح: «أنه بقية رجز أرسل على بني إسرائيل»، قوله: «الطاعون شهادة لكل مسلم» وورد فيه " أنه وخز الجن " وجاء أنه دعوة نبي زاد المعاد 35/4

¹⁶ Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar, Bukhari 7039 -

عَنْ سَالِمِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " رَأَيْتُ كَأَنَّ امْرَأَةً سَوْدَاءَ تَأْتِيَةَ الرَّأْسِ، خَرَجَتْ مِنَ الْمَدِينَةِ، حَتَّى قَامَتْ بِمُهَيِّعَةٍ . وَهِيَ الْجُحْفَةُ . فَأَوْلَتْ أَنْ تَبَاءَ الْمَدِينَةَ نُقِلَ إِلَيْهَا "

could have passed away due to the sickness associated with the city. Waba' here is referred to the general sickness, epidemic, that was killing some and making many sick.

The Prophet peace be on him would make a specific prayer for the city to be blessed and purified from this sickness, saying, "O Allah! Make Madinah beloved to us, as You made Makkah beloved to us, and even more! And transfer the fever that is in it to Al-Juhfa. O Allah! Bless our Mudd and our Sa' (kinds of measures for food and provision)."¹⁷

And when the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Ta'un (plague, epidemic disease) is rijz (calamity) of punishment, He punished with those who came before you." And Aisha said she asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about Ta'un (plagues) and he said, **"It is a punishment that Allah sends upon whoever he wills, but Allah has made it a mercy for believers."** Both of these contexts of Ta'un, refer again to the general epidemic diseases.

The Prophet peace be on him would say about Madinah, "There are at the entrances to Madinah angels who prevent Ta'un (plague) and Dajjal (the anti-christ) from entering it."¹⁸ In this case, Ta'un refers to the specific disease of pestilence or the well-known plague, but Madinah is not protected from general epidemic sicknesses.

Imam AlNawawi said, "Ta'un here consists of purulent pustules (boils) that erupt on the body. These appear in the groin, or in the axillae, or the hands, or on the fingers and elsewhere on the body, accompanied by swelling and intense pain... Every Ta'un is a Waba', but not every Waba' is a Ta'un."¹⁹

This hadith is critical in our understanding as Madinah is protected from plague entering it, but not epidemic diseases!

There are many times where epidemic diseases have entered the city of Madinah, including in the time of the caliphate of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

¹⁷ Aishah, Bukhari 6372 -

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ . رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا . قَالَتْ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " اللَّهُمَّ حَبِّبْ إِلَيْنَا الْمَدِينَةَ، كَمَا حَبَّبْتَ إِلَيْنَا مَكَّةَ أَوْ أَشَدَّ، وَأَنْقُلْ حُمَاهَا إِلَيَّ " اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي مَدَنَّا وَصَاعِنَا "الْجُحْفَةَ، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي مَدَنَّا وَصَاعِنَا"

¹⁸ Abu Hurayrah, Muslim 1379 -

"عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " عَلَى أَنْقَابِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَلَائِكَةٌ لَا يَدْخُلُهَا الطَّاعُونَ وَلَا الدَّجَالُ "

¹⁹ He continues to say, "As for waba' (epidemic disease), al-Khaleel and others said that it refers to the plague.

Others said that it refers to any widespread disease. The correct view, as noted by scholars, is that it is any sickness that affects many people in one part of the land, but not all of it; differs from ordinary diseases in the large number of people affected and in other ways; and where they are all affected by the same kind of sickness, unlike at other times, when people suffer from different kinds of sickness. Every Ta'un is a Waba', but not every Waba' is a Ta'un. – Sharh Sahih Muslim 14/204-207

Historical Timeline of Some Epidemics in Makkah and Madinah

Between 13-24 H - Abu AlAswad Du'aly (the famous scholar who derived the rules for Arabic grammar) narrates, "I went to Madinah when there was an outbreak of disease and the people were dying rapidly. I was sitting with `Umar and a funeral procession passed by..."²⁰

152 H – An inscription on a rock of a prayer asking for relief of an epidemic that struck Madinah found my historian, Muhammad AlMughadhawi. The inscription writes

اللهم ارفع الوباء والعسر عن أهل المدينة وكتب في جمادى سنة ثنتين وخمسين ومائة

O Allah remove the Waba' (epidemic disease) and difficulty from the people of Madinah, written in Jumada year 152



735 H – Diphtheria epidemic struck Madinah that would kill 15 people every day. They had not seen anything like it prior to it.

749 H – an epidemic disease struck Makkah

1235 H (1814 CE) – 8000 die in Hijaz in general due to epidemic disease

1246 H (1831 CE) – An epidemic disease that came from India killed three fourths of the pilgrims in Makkah.

1252-1255 H (1837 CE – 1840 CE) – Hajj period in Makkah witnesses epidemic diseases.

²⁰ Abu Al Aswad, Bukhari 2643 -

عَنْ أَبِي الْأَسْوَدِ، قَالَ أَتَيْتُ الْمَدِينَةَ وَقَدْ وَقَعَ بِهَا مَرَضٌ، وَهُمْ يَمُوتُونَ مَوْتًا دَرِيغًا، فَجَلَسْتُ إِلَى عُمَرَ. رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. فَمَرَّتْ جَنَازَةٌ... الْحَدِيثُ

The Plague of 'Amawas – Prophecy and Lessons in the Lives of the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ

The Prophet peace be on him in 9 H on the expedition of Tabuk, made a number of prophecies, among them that there will come a plague that will afflict a number of his followers. 'Awf bin Malik Al-Ashja'i said: "I came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) during the campaign of Tabuk, when he was in a tent made of leather, so I sat in front of the tent. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Enter, O 'Awf.' I said, 'All of me, O Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'All of you.' Then he said: 'O 'Awf, remember six things (that will occur) before the Hour comes, one of which is my death.' I was very shocked and saddened at that. He said: 'Count that as the first. Then (will come) the conquest of Bayt Al Maqdis (Jerusalem); then a disease which will appear among you and cause you and your offspring to die as martyrs and will purify your deeds; then there will be (much) wealth among you, so that if a man were to be given one hundred Dinar he would still be dissatisfied; and there will be tribulation among you that will not leave any Muslim house untouched; then there will be a treaty between you and the Romans, then they will betray you and march against you with eighty banners, under each of which will be twelve thousand (troops).'"²¹

The mention of the disease in the prophecy of the Prophet peace be on him occurred during the caliphate of Umar ibn Al Khattab. During a military campaign in the year 18 H/639 CE, a plague in Emmaus (Arabic: 'Amawas²²), Palestine a city 30 kilometers away from Bayt AlMaqdis (Jerusalem) broke out and many companions of the Prophet peace be on him were afflicted. AlJawhari said "it was the first plague in Islam,"²³ as prophesized by the Prophet peace be on him. The caliph at that time, Umar ibn AlKhattab heard about it, and out of his concern set out to meet them.

'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas narrates the events when 'Umar ibn AlKhattab set out for Sham (Levant: Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, etc). When he got as far as a place called 'Sargh', the commanders of the army, Abu 'Ubaydah ibn Jarrah and his companions met 'Umar and told him that a plague had broken out in Sham.

'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas said, 'Umar said to me, 'Call the early Muhajirun (the earliest Muslims and those who were the immigrants to Madinah) for me,' I called them, sought their consultation and informed them that a plague had broken out in Sham. They disagreed. Some of them said, 'You have set out on a matter and we do not think that you should retreat from it.' Others said, 'You have the rest of the people as well as the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), and we do not think that you should expose them to this plague.'

'Umar then said, 'Leave.'

Then he said, 'Call the Ansar (the helpers, the citizens of Madinah that gave refuge to all the migrants that came to the city) for me,' and I called them and he consulted them.

²¹ Ibn Majah 4042 and Bukhari 3176 -

عَوْفُ بْنُ مَالِكِ الْأَشْجَعِيِّ، قَالَ أَتَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. وَهُوَ فِي غَزْوَةِ تَبُوكَ وَهُوَ فِي خَيْبَاءٍ مِنْ أَدَمٍ فَجَلَسْتُ بِفَنَاءِ الْخَيْبَاءِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. " اذْخُلْ يَا عَوْفُ ". فَقُلْتُ بِكَلِّي يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ " بَكَلِّكَ ". ثُمَّ قَالَ " يَا عَوْفُ احْفَظْ خَلَالَ سَنَاتَيْنِ يَدِي السَّاعَةَ إِخْدَاهُنَّ مُؤْنِي ". قَالَ فَوَجِمْتُ عِنْدَهَا وَجِمَةً شَدِيدَةً. فَقَالَ " قُلْ إِخْدَى ثُمَّ فَتَحَ بَيْتَ الْمَقْدِسِ ثُمَّ دَاءٌ يَظْهَرُ فِيكُمْ تَسْتَشْهَدُ اللَّهُ بِهِ ذَرَارِيَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ وَبِرِّي بِهِ أَمْوَالِكُمْ ثُمَّ تَكُونُ الْأَمْوَالُ فِيكُمْ حَتَّى يُعْطَى الرَّجُلُ مِائَةَ دِينَارٍ فَيَظَلَّ سَاخِطًا وَفَتْنَةٌ تَكُونُ بَيْنَكُمْ لَا يَبْقَى بَيْتٌ مُسْلِمٍ إِلَّا دَخَلَتْهُ ثُمَّ تَكُونُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ بَنِي الْأَضْرَمِ هُدْنَةٌ فَيَغْدِرُونَ بِكُمْ فَيَسِيرُونَ إِلَيْكُمْ فِي ثَمَانِينَ غَايَةً تَحْتَ كُلِّ غَايَةٍ اثْنَا عَشَرَ أَلْفًا

²² Ibn Al Athir said عَمَّوَس: بتفح العين والميم والواو AlKamil fi AlTarikh, 2/378

²³ قال الجوهرى: هو أول طاعون كان في الإسلام بالشام، - AlRiyadh AlNadhirah fi Manaqib Al'Asharah 4/357 -

Their reaction was as the Muhajirun and disagreed as they had disagreed.

He said, 'Leave.' Then he said, 'Call those who are here of the elders of Quraysh who emigrated the year of the Conquest of Makkah.'

So I called them, and none among them disagreed about it. They said, 'We think that you should return with the people and not expose them to this plague.'

So 'Umar made an announcement among the people: 'I am returning in the morning, so return as well.'

Abu 'Ubaydah ibn Jarrah said, 'Are you fleeing from the decree of Allah?' 'Umar said, 'If only someone other than you had said that, Abu 'Ubaydah!'

Yes, 'we are fleeing from the decree of Allah to the decree of Allah'. Do you think that if you had camels and they went down into a valley which had two sides, one of which was fertile and the other barren. Is it not that if you grazed them on the fertile side, then that grazing would be by the decree of Allah, and if you grazed them on the barren side, then that grazing would also be by the decree of Allah?'

'Abdul Rahman ibn 'Awf -who had been absent on some errand- then came and said, 'I have some knowledge regarding this issue. I heard the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) say, "When you hear that [a plague] is in a land, do not go to it and if it occurs in a land that you are already in, then do not leave it, fleeing from it.'"

'Umar praised Allah [due to him making the correct decision] and then left."²⁴

Explaining the statement 'we are fleeing from the decree of Allah to the decree of Allah'

Ibn Hajar mentions another version of this narration which further explains this, Umar said,

"If we proceed, it will only be through the decree of Allah, and if we return, this will also be through the decree of Allah"

Ibn Hajar says, Allah has commanded us to be cautious and to abstain from things that will lead to our destruction. Since we are prohibited from putting ourselves in danger, we are fulfilling the decree of Allah by not proceeding. This was already predestined for us.²⁵

²⁴ Bukhari, 5729 and Muslim, 2219 -

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، أَنَّ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ . خَرَجَ إِلَى الشَّامِ حَتَّى إِذَا كَانَ بِسَرْعَ لِقِيهِ أَمْرَاءُ الْأَجْنَادِ أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ بْنُ الْجَرَّاحِ وَأَصْحَابُهُ، فَأَخْبَرُوهُ أَنَّ الْوَبَاءَ قَدْ وَقَعَ بِأَرْضِ الشَّامِ. قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ فَقَالَ عُمَرُ ادْعُ لِي الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الْأُولِينَ. فَدَعَاهُمْ فَاسْتَشَارَهُمْ وَأَخْبَرَهُمْ أَنَّ الْوَبَاءَ قَدْ وَقَعَ بِالشَّامِ فَاخْتَلَفُوا. فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ قَدْ خَرَجْتَ لِأَمْرٍ، وَلَا نَرَى أَنْ تَرْجِعَ عَنْهُ. وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ مَعَكَ بَقِيَّةُ النَّاسِ وَأَصْحَابُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَلَا نَرَى أَنْ نُقَدِّمَهُمْ عَلَى هَذَا الْوَبَاءِ. فَقَالَ ارْتَفِعُوا عَنِّي. ثُمَّ قَالَ ادْعُوا لِي الْأَنْصَارَ. فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَاسْتَشَارَهُمْ، فَسَلَكُوا سَبِيلَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ، وَاخْتَلَفُوا كَاخْتِلَافِهِمْ، فَقَالَ ارْتَفِعُوا عَنِّي. ثُمَّ قَالَ ادْعُ لِي مَنْ كَانَ هَا هُنَا مِنْ مَشِيخَةٍ فُرَيْشٍ مِنْ مُهَاجِرَةِ الْفَتْحِ. فَدَعَوْهُمْ، فَلَمْ يَخْتَلِفْ مِنْهُمْ عَلَيْهِ رَجُلَانِ، فَقَالُوا نَرَى أَنْ تَرْجِعَ بِالنَّاسِ، وَلَا نُقَدِّمَهُمْ عَلَى هَذَا الْوَبَاءِ، فَتَادَى عُمَرُ فِي النَّاسِ، إِيَّيْهِ مَصْبُوحٌ عَلَى ظَهْرٍ، فَأَصْبَحُوا عَلَيْهِ. قَالَ أَبُو عُبَيْدَةَ بْنُ الْجَرَّاحِ أَفِرَارًا مِنْ قَدَرِ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ عُمَرُ لَوْ غَيْرَكَ قَالَهَا يَا أَبَا عُبَيْدَةَ، نَعَمْ نَفِرُ مِنْ قَدَرِ اللَّهِ إِلَى قَدَرِ اللَّهِ، أَرَأَيْتَ لَوْ كَانَ لَكَ إِيلٌ هَبَطَتْ وَادِيًا لَهُ عُذُوتَانِ، إِحْدَاهُمَا خَصْبَةٌ، وَالْأُخْرَى جَدْبَةٌ، أَلَيْسَ إِنْ رَعَيْتَ الْخَصْبَةَ رَعَيْتَهَا بِقَدَرِ اللَّهِ، وَإِنْ رَعَيْتَ الْجَدْبَةَ رَعَيْتَهَا بِقَدَرِ اللَّهِ قَالَ فَجَاءَ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ عَوْفٍ، وَكَانَ مُتَعَيِّبًا فِي بَعْضِ حَاجَتِهِ فَقَالَ إِنَّ عُنْدِي فِي هَذَا عَلِمًا سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ " إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَا تَقْدُمُوا عَلَيْهِ، وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا فِرَارًا مِنْهُ ". قَالَ فَحَمِدَ اللَّهُ عُمَرَ ثُمَّ انْصَرَفَ

²⁵ Fath AlBari, Ibn Hajar 5729 and Sharh Sahih Muslim, Al Nawawi, 5745

How The Righteous Dealt with Plague and Epidemic Disease

In the Ta'un of 'Amawas there are a number of spiritual lessons of how a believer deals with affliction of epidemic in the example of the companions of the Prophet – Allah be pleased with them.

Abu Ubaydah ibn AlJarrah the companion of the Prophet peace be on him, among the ten promised paradise by the Prophet while he was alive, stayed and aided his people and was in their service. He would get on the pulpit and comforting people who were afflicted by saying, *إن هذا الوجل رحمةٌ، أيها الناس، إن هذا الوجل رحمةٌ*, “O People! This affliction is a mercy for you all, the prayer of the prophet, and the passing of the righteous before you...”²⁶ and he was afflicted with plague thereafter. He then spoke to them saying

Sa'id ibn AlMusayyib narrates when Abu Ubaydah was afflicted with the plague, he called the believers around him and said, “I’m advising you all with an advice if you all accept it you would never cease to remain on good. Establish the prayer, fast the month of Ramadan, give charity, go to Hajj and Umrah, come together, advise your leaders and don’t cheat them. Do not let the world deceive you. Even if a person lived one thousand years, they will undoubtedly reach what you are witnessing before you, my demise. Allah has written death upon the children of Adam and they are in the state of passing. The smartest of them are the most subservient to their Lord and the ones that act toward the final day of their destination. Wasalamu’alaikum wa rahmatullah. O Muadh ibn Jabal lead the people in prayer.”

He passed away thereafter, Allah be pleased with him. Muadh ibn Jabal at his funeral stood before people and addressed them saying, “O People! Turn back to Allah, repent for your sins. For any servant that meets Allah repentant from their sins has a claim of deserving Allah to forgive them. Whoever has a loan on them let them pay it off because a servant (of Allah) is held under the pledge of giving back their loan. Whoever has woken up today and abandoned their brother (due to a disagreement and grudge) then go out and meet them and reconcile. It’s not befitting that any Muslim abandons their brother more than three days. O Muslims! You have been distressed by the passing of a man that I don’t claim I have seen a servant more dutiful or open hearted, nor more distant from harboring misfortune (toward others), or more loving of everyone and wishing good for them advising them than him. Stand and seek mercy for him and the prayer for him.”²⁷

²⁶ AlBidayah wa AlNihayah 7/91

²⁷ AIRiyadh AlNadhirah fi Manaqib Al’Asharah 4/358 -

عن سعيد بن المسيب قال: لما طعن أبو عبيدة بالأردن دعا من حضره من المسلمين وقال: إني موصيكم بوصية إن قبلتموها لن تزالوا بخير: أقيموا الصلاة، وصوموا شهر رمضان، وتصدقوا، وحجوا واعتصموا، وتواصوا، وأنصحوا لأمرائكم ولا تغشوه، ولا تلهكم الدنيا فإن امرأ لو عمر ألف حول ما كان له بد من أن يصير إلى مصرعي هذا الذي ترون. إن الله تعالى كتب الموت على بني آدم فهم ميتون، فأكيسهم أطوعهم لربه وأعملهم ليوم معاده، والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله، يا معاذ بن جبل صل بالناس. ومات رحمه الله فقام معاذ في الناس، فقال: يا أيها الناس، توبوا إلى الله من ذنوبكم، فأبما عبد يلقى الله تعالى تائباً من ذنبه إلا كان على الله حقاً أن يغفر له، من كان عليه دين فليقضه، فإن العبد مرتين بدينه، ومن أصبح منكم مهاجراً أخاه فليقله فليصالحه، ولا ينبغي لمسلم أن يهجر أخاه أكثر من ثلاثة أيام، أيها المسلمون قد فجعتم برجل ما أزعم أني رأيت عبداً أبصر صدره ولا أبعد من الغائلة ولا أشد حبا للعامة ولا أنصح منه، فترحموا عليه واحضروا الصلاة عليه

Muadh ibn Jabal lost children and his family as well before passing himself, all the while patiently saying as Abu Ubaydah said before him, "This affliction is a mercy for you all, the prayer of the prophet, and the passing of the righteous before you."

Al Harith ibn Hisham, the companions of the Prophet (Allah be pleased with him), moved to Sham before the plague hit with 70 of his family members, and all of them passed away except 4. He passed away as well.

Shurahbil ibn Hasanah the great commander of the conquests of Persia and Roman empires and among the generals of the army of Bayt Al Maqdis (Jerusalem), also passed in this plague.

AlFadl ibn Abbas, the cousin of the Prophet peace be on him, also passed in this plague. Yazid ibn Abu Sufyan, the brother of Muawiyah, passed as well. The great companion and orator of Pre-Islam and Islam, Suhail ibn 'Amr alongside his son Abu Jandal, as well as Abu Malik Al Ash'ari, and many more of the companions and other righteous men and women passed away in this plague.

Khalid ibn Al Walid had 40 family members who died in the plague of 'Amawas.

It's recorded that between 25000 to 30000 who were afflicted in that area perished, and only 6000 survived.

There are some reports that Bilal ibn Abu Rabah, the caller of the Prophet peace be on him, was also among those that passed away in Damascus due to the plague of 'Amawas (and others mention he passed away a natural death later on).²⁸

Other great scholars who have passed from plague are, Muhammad Murtada Al Zabidi the author of Taj Al 'Arus the famous lexicon. Abu Al Aswad AlDu'aly, the famous grammarian that first wrote the rules of Arabic grammar also passed away in 69 H in another plague known as Al Jarif.

Plague in 819 H also led to the death of three of the children of the famous scholar of hadith Ibn Hajar AlAsqalani. This was among the reasons he wrote a book dedicated to the virtue of passing away in plague entitled, Badhl Al Ma'un Fi Fadl Al Ta'un.

There are even scholars that wrote about plague and passed away due to them. Taj AlDin AlSubki wrote Juz'un fi Al Ta'un, a scholarly work on plague and passed away due to plague in 771 H.

Shihab Al Din Al Tilmisani, who passed away 776 H, wrote Al Tib Al Masnun fi Daf' Al Ta'un, and then passed away due to epidemic disease. As well as Ibn AlWardi who wrote AlNaba' 'An Al Waba' and passed away to disease 749 H. As well as the great historian Al Safdi, author of AlWafi bil Wafayat, and prolific author of over 600 volumes, passed away due to epidemic plague 764 H.

Yazid ibn Nu'amah narrated, "a young girl passed away in the plague of Al Jazif. Her father saw her (in a dream) after her death and asked her, 'My daughter, tell me about the next life' She replied, 'My dear father, we've approached a serious, great matter. Now we know and cannot act, and you all act but do not know. I swear by Allah that one remembrance or two (saying subhanAllah once or twice) or one

²⁸ Tahdhib AlKamal fi Asma' AlRijal 4/290

rak'a or two (unites of prayer) in my scroll of deeds is more beloved to me than the world and what is in it."²⁹

The righteous of the past dealt with the reality of afflictions with the certainty of trusting in God and conviction that nothing granted can be only with His will and nothing taken can only be through His permission. They fully believed in their being that what befalls a human will never miss them, and what they missed was never meant for them, and this life is a mere temporal, yet gravely important preparatory phase of existence that prepared them for what is to come. As our beloved Prophet peace be on him said regarding plague that it is **It is a punishment that Allah sends upon whoever He wills** - and that it is **فَجَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ رَحْمَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ** He made it a mercy to the *Mu'minin*, and he did not say *Muslimin*. *Mu'minin* here refers to a higher level of faith of those who internalize and have conviction of faith beyond just believing and entering into Islam. As the faith has three levels, Islam, Iman, and Ihsan. The phrase "mercy to Mu'minin" refers here to a higher level of faith that internalizes the wisdoms of God's divine decree and actualizes it into not just actions of the limbs, statements of the tongue, but actions and statements of the heart as well such as absolute reliance on God, patience in times of adversity, and gratitude. This makes the statement of our Beloved Prophet even that more powerful. Such believers echo the words of our Lord who describes the mark of such believers and says,

قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا. وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

Say, "Nothing will ever afflict us except what Allah has destined for us. He is our Protector." So in Allah let the believers put their trust.

Quran 9:15

²⁹ Kitab AIRuh 25 -

قال يزيد بن نعامه هلكت جارية في طاعون الجارف فلقبها أبوها بعد موتها فقال لها يا بنية أخبريني عن الآخرة قالت يا أبت قدمنا على أمر عظيم نعلم ولا نعمل وتعملون ولا تعلمون والله لتسبيحة أو تسبيحتان أو ركعة أو ركعتان في صحيفة عملي أحب إلي من الدنيا وما فيها

'Cleanliness is half of faith' – The Prophetic Method of Handling Epidemics: Preventative Measures

The Prophet peace be on him said **"Cleanliness is half of faith."**³⁰ And among the greatest forms of responsibility is that a person keeps completely clean – internally as previously discussed, and externally as the Prophet peace be on him mentioned.

1. **Hygiene - Washing Hands**

Salman Al Farisi one day approached the Prophet and said, "I read in the Torah 'Blessings in food lies in washing the hand after meals.' The Prophet said, **'Blessing in food lies in washing the hand before and after eating.'**"³¹

If washing the hands is encouraged prior and after eating than it's a priori most important to wash one's hands in precaution of epidemic diseases.

2. **Sick people should quarantine and stay away from gatherings and mixing with those that are not sick.**

The Prophet peace be on him obligated that whoever is healthy should not come near the sick. This was enjoined especially for places of gathering like the masjid. The Prophet peace be on him said, **"a sick person should not mix with a healthy one."**³²

The Prophet peace be on him said **"one should run away from the leper as one runs away from a lion."**³³ Meaning that one shouldn't mix with anyone with contagious diseases except if there are precautions or they are aiding them (such as health workers).

3. **Containment**

The Prophet peace be on him said **"When you hear that (plague, epidemic disease) is in a land, do not go to it and if it occurs in a land that you are already in, then do not leave it, fleeing from it."**

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) discussed this matter in more detail, and said that there are three scenarios with regard to leaving a land in which the plague is occurring:

- When a person leaves in order to flee from it, and not for any other purpose. This is undoubtedly included in the prohibition.
- When he leaves for a purpose other than fleeing from it, such as work and the like. This is not included in the prohibition, and this is the category concerning the permissibility of which an-Nawawi narrated that there was scholarly consensus.

³⁰ Abu Musa AlAsh'ari, Muslim 223 -

عَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " الطُّهُورُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأُ الْمِيزَانَ . وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأَانِ - أَوْ تَمْلَأُ - مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالصَّلَاةُ نُورٌ وَالصَّدَقَةُ بُرْهَانٌ وَالصَّبْرُ ضِيَاءٌ وَالْقُرْآنُ حُجَّةٌ لَكَ أَوْ عَلَيْكَ كُلُّ النَّاسِ يَغْدُو فَبَايَعُ نَفْسَهُ فَمَغْتَبُهَا أَوْ مُوَبِّقُهَا

³¹ Tirmidhi 1846, Abu Dawud 375 – some discuss a weakness in chain but it is sound in meaning

عن سلمان، قَالَ قَرَأْتُ فِي النَّوْزَةِ أَنَّ بَرَكَةَ الطَّعَامِ الْوُضُوءُ بَعْدَهُ فَذَكَرْتُ ذَلِكَ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ بِمَا قَرَأْتُ فِي النَّوْزَةِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " بَرَكَةُ الطَّعَامِ الْوُضُوءُ قَبْلَهُ وَالْوُضُوءُ بَعْدَهُ "

³² Abu Salamah, Bukhari 2221 -

أَنْ لَا يُورِدَ مُمْرِضٌ عَلَى مُصِيبٍ

³³ Abu Hurayrah, Bukhari 5707 -

حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ مَيْمَانَ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " لَا عَدْوَى وَلَا طَيْرَةَ وَلَا هَامَةَ وَلَا صَفْرَ، وَفِرٌّ مِنَ الْمُجَدُّومِ كَمَا تَقْرَأُ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ "

- c. When a person leaves for the purpose of work or otherwise, but adds to that the aim of being safe from the epidemic. The scholars differed concerning this, but Ibn Hajar stated that the view of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) was that it is permissible to leave in this case.³⁴

A repercussion and application of this in our time is that of quarantine and banning mass travel to the affected areas as soon as an epidemic is announced. It would not be of any sense nor wisdom to delay travel bans unless there is guarantee that a disease is contained.

What we are witnessing in our time is a lackluster and undermined response that has far reaching effects when precautions aren't taken immediately to contain the spread of disease as is exemplified by prophetic injunction through both – self-quarantine through religious injunction not to spread disease, as well as mass travel ban in order to have successful containment of the disease.

4. **Closure** – of public spaces, and not attending congregational prayer and Jumu'ah in Masjids. Things such as public closure of schools, public events, are responses that require governmental advisory and scholarly councils.

Ibn Qudamah mentions “and a valid excuse for missing congregational and Jumu'ah prayer is the one who is fearful according to the Prophet peace be on him who said, ‘Whoever hears the caller to prayer, nothing prevents them from responding to him except a valid excuse. They asked what’s a valid excuse? And he responded, ‘fear or sickness.’ Fear has three levels:

1. Fear for oneself
2. Fear for wealth
3. Fear for one’s family.”³⁵

³⁴ Fath AlBari Sharh Sahih AlBukhari 10/1990

³⁵ AlMughni 4/451

فَصَلِّ: وَيُعَدِّرُ فِي تَرْكِهِمَا الْخَائِفُ؛ لِقَوْلِ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ «الْعُدُّرُ خَوْفٌ أَوْ مَرَضٌ» - وَالْخَوْفُ، ثَلَاثَةٌ أَنْوَاعٍ: خَوْفٌ عَلَى النَّفْسِ، وَخَوْفٌ عَلَى الْمَالِ، وَخَوْفٌ عَلَى الْأَهْلِ

Overcoming Trials and Difficulties

Suhaib reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: **“Amazing is the affair of the Mu’min for there is good for him in every matter and this is not the case with anyone except the Mu’min. If they are happy, then they thank Allah and that is good for them. If they are harmed and show patience and that is good for them.”**³⁶ The Prophet peace be on him again emphasizes that such level of understanding comes from a development of spiritual awareness. The station of amazement is for a *Mu’min* not just simply a Muslim.

Mahmud ibn Labid reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: **“If Allah loves a people, then he afflicts them with trials. Whoever is patient has the reward of patience, and whoever is impatient has the fault of impatience.”**³⁷

Mus'ab bin Sa'd narrated from his father that a man said: **“O Messenger of Allah! Which of the people is tried most severely?”** He said: **“The Prophets, then those nearest to them (in righteousness), then those nearest to them. A person is tried according to their faith; if they are firm in their faith, then their trials are more severe, and if they are weak in their religion, then they are tried according to the strength of their faith. The servant shall continue to be tried until they are left walking on the earth without any sins.”**³⁸

Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: **“If Allah intends good for his servant, then he hastens the punishment for him in this world. If Allah intends evil for his servant, then he withholds punishment for his sins until he appears on the Day of Resurrection.”**

In another narration, the Prophet said: **“Greater rewards come with greater trials. When Allah loves a people, He will test them. Whoever is pleased will be satisfied, and whoever is displeased will have indignation.”**³⁹

³⁶ Muslim 2999 -

عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَاءٌ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَاءٌ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ

³⁷ Musnad Ahmad 23122 -

إِذَا أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ قَوْمًا ابْتَلَاهُمْ فَمَنْ صَبَرَ فَلَهُ الصَّبْرُ وَمَنْ جَزِعَ فَلَهُ الْجَزَعُ

³⁸ Tirmidhi 2398 -

عَنْ مُضْعَبِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيُّ النَّاسِ أَشَدُّ بَلَاءً قَالَ " الْأَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الْأَمْثَلُ فَلِأَمْثَلِ فَيُبْتَلَى الرَّجُلُ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ فَإِنْ كَانَ دِينُهُ ضَلْبًا اشْتَدَّ بَلَاؤُهُ وَإِنْ كَانَ فِي دِينِهِ رِقَّةٌ ابْتُلِيَ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ فَمَا يَبْرُحُ الْبَلَاءُ بِالْعَبْدِ حَتَّى يَتْرَكَهُ يَمْشِي عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مَا عَلَيْهِ خَطِيئَةٌ

³⁹ Tirmidhi 2396 -

إِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِعَبْدِهِ الْخَيْرَ عَجَّلَ لَهُ الْعُقُوبَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِعَبْدِهِ الشَّرَّ أَمْسَكَ عَنْهُ بِدُنْبِهِ حَتَّى يُوَافِيَ بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ قَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : إِنَّ عَظَمَ الْجَزَاءِ مَعَ عَظَمِ الْبَلَاءِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا أَحَبَّ قَوْمًا ابْتَلَاهُمْ فَمَنْ رَضِيَ فَلَهُ الرِّضَا وَمَنْ سَخِطَ فَلَهُ السَّخَطُ

Prophetic Prayers for Epidemics and Sickness

These are prophetic prayers that we seek divine protection from sickness from. Please memorize them, recite them on your loved ones, and teach children.

1. Aban ibn Uthman said: "I heard Uthman ibn Affan (his father) say: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: If anyone says three times:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ
Bismillahi aladhi la yadurru ma'a ismihi shay'un fi alardhi wa la fis-samaa'i
wa huwa as-sami' al-'aleem

"In the name of Allah, when Whose name is mentioned nothing on Earth or in Heaven can cause harm, and He is the Hearer, the Knower" he will not suffer sudden affliction till the morning, and if anyone says this in the morning, he will not suffer sudden affliction till the evening. Aban was afflicted by some paralysis and when a man who heard the tradition began to look at him, he said to him: Why are you looking at me? I swear by Allah, I did not tell a lie about Uthman, nor did Uthman tell a lie about the Prophet (ﷺ), but that day when I was afflicted by it, I became angry and forgot to say them."⁴⁰

2. Anas ibn Malik narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبَرَصِ وَالْجُنُونِ وَالْجُدَامِ وَمِنْ سَيِّئِ الْأَسْقَامِ
Allahuma inni a'udhu bika min albarasi waljununi waljudhaami wa min
sayy'i-l asqaami

"O Allah, I seek refuge in you from leprosy, madness, elephantiasis, and evil diseases."⁴¹

3. Ziyad ibn 'Alaqah narrated from his uncle, that the Prophet peace be on him used to pray

اللَّهُمَّ جَنِّبْنِي مُنْكَرَاتِ الْأَخْلَاقِ، وَالْأَهْوَاءِ، وَالْأَعْمَالِ، وَالْأَدْوَاءِ
Allahuma jannibni munkaraati alakhlaaqi wa alahwaa-i wal'amaali wal-
adwaa

"O Allah, keep me away from evil character, desires, deeds, and diseases."⁴²

⁴⁰ Abu Dawud 5088 -

عَنْ أَبَانَ بْنِ عُثْمَانَ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عُثْمَانَ بْنَ عَفَّانَ، رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " مَا مِنْ عِنْدِي يَقُولُ فِي صَبَاحِ كُلِّ يَوْمٍ وَمَسَاءٍ كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ فَيَضُرُّهُ شَيْءٌ " . وَكَانَ أَبَانُ قَدْ أَصَابَهُ ظَرْفٌ فَالَجَ فَجَعَلَ الرَّجُلُ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ فَقَالَ لَهُ أَبَانُ مَا تَنْظُرُ أَمَا إِنَّ الْحَدِيثَ كَمَا حَدَّثْتُكَ وَلَكِنِّي لَمْ أَفْلُهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِيُضَيِّحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ قَدْرَهُ . قَالَ هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ غَرِيبٌ

⁴¹ Abu Dawud 1554

⁴² Mustadrak Hakim 1949

4. Khaula bint Hakim Sulamiyya narrated :I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: When anyone lands at a place, and then says:

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ

A'uthu bi-kalimaat illahi at-taamaati min sharri ma khalaq

'I seek refuge in the Perfect Word of Allah from the evil of what He has created,'

nothing would harm them until they move from that place."⁴³

5. Ibn 'Umar said: "The Messenger of Allah never abandoned these supplications, every morning and evening:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي
دِينِي وَدُنْيَايَ وَأَهْلِي وَمَالِي اللَّهُمَّ اسْتُرْ عَورَاتِي وَآمِنْ رُوعَاتِي وَأَحْفَظْنِي مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْ وَمِنْ
خَلْفِي وَعَنْ يَمِينِي وَعَنْ شِمَالِي وَمِنْ فَوْقِي وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أُغْتَالَ مِنْ تَحْتِي

Allahumma inni as'alukal-'afwa wal-'afiyah fid-dunya wal-akhirah.

Allahumma inni as'alukal-'afwa wal-'afiyah fi dini wa dunyaya wa ahli wa
mali. Allahum-mastur 'awrati, wa amin raw'ati wahfazni min bayni yadayya,
wa min khalfi, wa 'an yamini wa 'an shimali, wa min fawqi, wa 'audhu bika
an ughtala min tahti

O Allah, I ask You for forgiveness and well-being in this world and in the Hereafter. O Allah, I ask
You for forgiveness and well-being in my religious and my worldly affairs. O Allah, conceal my
faults, calm my fears, and protect me from before me and behind me, from my right and my
left, and from above me, and I seek refuge in You from being taken unaware from beneath
me)."⁴⁴

⁴³ Muslim 2708 -

عَنْ خَوْلَةَ بِنْتِ حَكِيمِ السُّلَمِيَّةِ، أَنَّهَا سَمِعَتْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ " إِذَا نَزَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنَزَلًا فَلْيَتَقَلَّ أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا
خَلَقَ . فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَضُرُّهُ شَيْءٌ حَتَّى يَرْتَجِلَ مِنْهُ "

⁴⁴ Ibn Majah 3871

6. Ibn 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to supplicate:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ زَوَالِ نِعْمَتِكَ، وَتَحَوُّلِ عَافِيَتِكَ، وَفُجَاءَةِ نِقْمَتِكَ، وَجَمِيعِ
سَخَطِكَ

"Allahumma inni a'udhu bika min zawali ni'matika, wa tahawwuli 'afiyatika,
wa fuja'ati niqmatika, wa jami'i sakhatika

O Allah! I seek refuge in You against the declining of Your Favours, passing of safety, the suddenness of Your punishment and all that which displeases You"⁴⁵

7. Ibn 'Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah peace be on him said,
"Whoever sees someone afflicted and prays

الحمد لله الذي عافاني مما ابتلاك به ، و فضلني على كثير ممن خلق تفضيلاً
Alhamdulillah aladhi 'afaani mimmaa ibtalaaka bihi wa faddalani ala
kathirin mimman khalaqa tafdila

All praise is due to Allah who has protected me from what he has tested you with and favored me greatly over many who He has created."

will be kept safe from that calamity, no matter what it is."⁴⁶

8. Sa'd narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "The supplication of Dhun-Nun (Prophet Yunus, Jonah) when he prayed, while in the belly of the whale was:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ
La ilaha illa anta subhanaka inni kuntu min adh-dhalimin

'There is none worthy of worship except You, Glory to You, Indeed, I have been of the transgressors.' No muslim supplicates with it for anything, ever, except Allah responds to them."⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Muslim 2739

⁴⁶ Ibn Majah 3892 -

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمرَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ . " مَنْ فَجَّئَهُ صَاحِبُ بَلَاءٍ فَقَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي عَافَانِي مِمَّا ابْتَلَاكَ بِهِ وَفَضَّلَنِي عَلَى كَثِيرٍ
مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ تَفْضِيلاً - عُوذِي مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْبَلَاءِ كَأَنَّ مَا كَانَ

⁴⁷ Tirmidhi, 3505 & Musnad Ahmad -

عَنْ سَعْدٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " دَعْوَةُ ذِي النُّونِ إِذْ دَعَا وَهُوَ فِي بَطْنِ الْحُوتِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ .
"فَإِنَّهُ لَمْ يَدْعُ بِهَا رَجُلٌ مُسْلِمٌ فِي شَيْءٍ قَطُّ إِلَّا اسْتَجَابَ اللَّهُ لَهُ

9. Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's messenger said: seek refuge in Allah from four

(اللهم إِنَّا نَعُدُّ بِكَ) مِنْ جَهْدِ الْبَلَاءِ، وَدَرَكِ الشَّقَاءِ، وَسُوءِ الْقَضَاءِ، وَشَمَاتَةِ الْأَعْدَاءِ
(O Allah we seek refuge in you) from the difficulties of severe calamities, having an evil end, a bad fate, and from the malicious joy of your enemies ⁴⁸

10. Umm Salama reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying:

If any Muslim who suffers some calamity says, what Allah has commanded him,

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ
اللَّهُمَّ أَجْرِنِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَأَخْلِفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا
Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajiun
Allahuma ajurni fi musibati wa akhlif li khairan minha

" We belong to Allah and to Him shall we return; O Allah, reward me for my affliction and give me something better than it in exchange for it,"

Allah will give him something better than it in exchange. ..."⁴⁹

11. Anas reported that Allah's messenger(ﷺ) said: When a person goes out of their house and says:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ
Bismillahi tawakkaltu 'ala Allahi wa la wala wala quwwata illa billah

"In the name of Allah, I trust in Allah; there is no might and no power but in Allah,"

the following will be said to him at that time: "You are guided, defended and protected." The devils will go far from him and another devil will say: How can you deal with a man who has been guided, defended and protected?"⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Bukhari 6616 -

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " تَعَوَّذُوا بِاللَّهِ مِنْ جَهْدِ الْبَلَاءِ، وَدَرَكِ الشَّقَاءِ، وَسُوءِ الْقَضَاءِ، وَشَمَاتَةِ الْأَعْدَاءِ

⁴⁹ Muslim 918 -

ابْنِ سَفِينَةَ، يُحَدِّثُ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أُمَّ سَلَمَةَ، زَوْجَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ " مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ نُصِيبُهُ مُصِيبَةً فَيَقُولُ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ اللَّهُمَّ أَجْرِنِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَأَخْلِفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا إِلَّا أَجَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي مُصِيبَتِهِ وَأَخْلَفَ لَهُ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا " . قَالَتْ فَلَمَّا تَوَقَّيْتُ أَبُو سَلَمَةَ فَلْتٌ كَمَا أَمَرَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَخْلَفَ اللَّهُ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

⁵⁰ Abu Dawud 5095 -

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " إِذَا خَرَجَ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ فَقَالَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ " . قَالَ " يُقَالُ حَيْثُ نَزَّ هُدَيْتَ وَكُفَيْتَ وَوُقِفْتَ فَتَتَخَى لَهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فَيَقُولُ لَهُ شَيْطَانُ آخِرُ كَيْفَ لَكَ بِرَجُلٍ قَدْ هُدِيَ وَكُفِيَ وَوُقِيَ

12. Abdullah ibn Umar narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never failed to utter these prayers in the evening and in the morning:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي دِينِي وَدُنْيَايَ وَأَهْلِي وَمَالِي
اللَّهُمَّ اسْتُرْ عَوْرَاتِي وَآمِنْ رَوْعَاتِي
اللَّهُمَّ احْفَظْنِي مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِي وَعَنْ يَمِينِي وَعَنْ شِمَالِي وَمِنْ فَوْقِي وَأَعُوذُ
بِعَظَمَتِكَ أَنْ أُغْتَالَ مِنْ تَحْتِي

Allahuma inni as'aluka alaafiyat fid-dunya wal-aakhirati

Allahuma inni as'aluka al'afwa wal-'afiyata fi deeni wa dunyaya wa ahli wa maali

Allahuma ihfadhni min bayni yadayya wa min khalif wa 'an yameeni wa 'an shimaali wa min fawqi wa 'audhu bi-'adhamatika an ughtaala min tahti

O Allah, I ask You for security & well-being in this world and in the Hereafter

O Allah! I ask You for forgiveness and well-being in my religion and my worldly affairs, in my family and my property

O Allah! conceal my fault or faults, and keep me safe from the things which I fear;

O Allah! guard me in front of me and behind me, on my right hand and on my left, and from above me: and I seek in Your greatness from unexpected harm from below me."⁵¹

'Uthman may Allah be pleased with him when he was injured and bleeding to death, said,

لا إله إلا أنت سبحانك إني كنت من الظالمين. اللهم إني أستعديك و أستعينك على جميع

أموري و أسألك الصبر على بليتي

"There is no deity other than You, Exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers. O Allah, I seek help from You against them and for all matters. I ask You to grant me patience for what You have afflicted me with."⁵²

⁵¹ Ibn Majah 3871 , Musnad Ahmad, others -

حَدَّثَنَا جُبَيْرُ بْنُ أَبِي سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ جُبَيْرِ بْنِ مُطْعِمٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ عُمَرَ، يَقُولُ لَمْ يَكُنْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَدْعُ هَؤُلَاءِ الدَّعَوَاتِ حِينَ يُغْسَبُ وَحِينَ يُصْبَحُ " اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي دِينِي وَدُنْيَايَ وَأَهْلِي وَمَالِي اللَّهُمَّ اسْتُرْ عَوْرَاتِي وَآمِنْ رَوْعَاتِي وَاحْفَظْنِي مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِي وَعَنْ يَمِينِي وَعَنْ شِمَالِي وَمِنْ فَوْقِي وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أُغْتَالَ مِنْ تَحْتِي " . قَالَ وَكَيْفَ يَغْنِي الْخَشْفُ

⁵² Tarikh Damishq 39/401

In Final

Beduizzaman Said Nursi (d.1960), the great reviver of Islam in Turkey, Allah have mercy on him relays some of the great wisdoms of afflictions by saying, "In everything, even the things which appear to be the ugliest, there is an aspect of true beauty. Yes, everything in the universe, every event, is either in itself beautiful, which is called 'essential beauty' (Husn-u Bizzat), or it is beautiful with regard to its results, which is called 'relative beauty' (Husn-u Bilgayr). There are certain events which are apparently ugly and confused, but beneath that apparent veil, there are most shining instances of beauty and order... Beneath the veil of events like storms, earthquakes, and plagues, is the unfolding of numerous hidden immaterial flowers. The seeds of many potentialities which have not developed sprout and grow beautiful on account of events which are apparently ugly. As though general upheavals and universal change are all immaterial rain. But because man is both enamored of the apparent and is self-centered, he considers only the externals and pronounces them to be ugly. Since he is self-centered, he only sees them according to how they affect himself and so judges them to be ugly. However though one of their purposes may be related to man, thousands of others serve to manifest their Maker's Names."⁵³

Imam Al Ghazali said, "In the intricate paths of life when difficulties and hardships confront a man, and the darkness of difficulty and suffering becomes long, it is patience only that acts like a light for a Muslim, that keeps him safe from wandering here and there, and saves him from the muddy marsh of disappointment, desperation and frustration."

Allah said,

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَعْلَمَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَنَبْلُوَ أَخْبَارَكُمْ

And We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you and the patient, and We will test your affairs.

Quran 47:31

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَا هُمْ بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ
لَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِن قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

Verily, We sent (Messengers) to many nations before you (O Muhammad). And We seized them with extreme poverty (or loss in wealth) and loss in health (with calamities) so that they might humble themselves (believe with humility).

When Our Torment reached them, why then did they not humble themselves (believe with humility)? But their hearts became hardened, and Shaytan (Satan) beautified for them that which they used to do."
Quran 6:42

⁵³ Risale-i Nur, 18th Word

وَإِن يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِن يَمَسُّكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

If God touches you with affliction, no one can remove it except Him, and if He touches you with good, He has power over all things
Quran 6:17

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ
الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

We shall certainly test you with fear and hunger, and loss of property, lives, and crops. But [Prophet], give good news to those who are patiently steadfast, those who say, when afflicted with a calamity, 'We belong to God and to Him we shall return.'
Quran 2:155-156

Further Reading:

Badhl Al Ma'un fi Fadl Al Ta'un – Ibn Hajar

Tuhfat AlRaghibin fi Bayan Amr AlTawa'in – Zakariya Al Ansari (a summary of the above work by Ibn Hajar)

Kitab Al 'Itibar – Ibn Qutaybah

Kitab Al Marad wa Al Kaffarat – Ibn Abu Al Dunya

Ma rawahu Al Wa'un fi Akhbar Al Ta'un – Al Suyuti

Kitab Al Ta'un wa Ahkamuhu – Al Munajjimy

Plague in Early Islamic History – Michael W. Dols

Ta'un and Waba' Conceptions of Plague and Pestilence in Early Islam – Lawrence I. Conrad



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