

Corona Pandemic: Self-realization from Islamic Perspective

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Abstract: Man is the best creation of the Creator. Human beings are in the grip of a global pandemic today resulting from the worldwide spread of Covid-19 coronavirus. Emerging from China's Wuhan, Covid-19 has engulfed the entire world. More than five lakh people have already died due to this pandemic. Epidemics and pandemics are mentioned in the history of Islam. Islam also has guidelines on the causes of the pandemic: what to do during the pandemic and how to get rid of it. Islam is a complete system of life covering all aspects of human life. If we ask questions about the dangers, misfortunes or epidemics in human life, we find the answer in the Islamic way of life. The Corona pandemic carries a significant message in our lives, giving the logistics of new thinking. The severity of the pandemic leads us to a more responsible, sensitive and humanistic lifestyle. It also expands the field of our self-realization. Witnessing the misery of human society, we can dedicate ourselves to the goal of building a peaceful, livable, and clean world; Islam has taught us that. In the present article, we will discuss the above issues from an Islamic point of view in order to learn from the terrible experience of the Corona pandemic, to identify the issues of self-realization, and to make the whole world a safe haven for all creation by re-creating real life in a humanistic spirit.

Introduction

The greatest prophet of Islam Mohammad (peace be upon him) has declared that the person who knows himself also knows his creator. (Scientific

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Information Database, n.d.) In Islam, there is a direct urge for everyone to know and recognize himself. When a person thinks about himself, he will also reflect positive thoughts about other creations. That thought will drive him towards the welfare of creation. There is a universal welfare in knowing and understanding oneself. He who knows himself will want to know others. He who seeks his own welfare will seek the welfare of others. He who does not seek his own harm will not harm others. He who understands his own lack will work to relieve the lack of others. He who is aware of his own needs will be busy meeting the needs of others. Therefore, it is essential in human life that every human being will know and understand himself. This knowledge and understanding is what we call self-realization; it is very much needed in today's world. This self-realization must be awakened in humankind in the ongoing pandemic all over the world. There is no substitute for self-realization today in meeting the demands of the times and bringing the expected peace among humankind. This pandemic has given us a sense of self-realization and an opportunity to learn from it.

Corona and the Unity of Humankind

The whole world is in the grip of a pandemic today. Emerging from China's Wuhan, it is now engulfing the entire world. Corona virus has spread everywhere, including Asia, Africa, Europe and America. World humanity today is utterly helpless to this invisible force. This attack of corona virus is not against any particular country, nor against any particular nation. It is not attacking the followers of any particular religion, but rather attacking the followers of all religions; it is hurting the whole human race mercilessly. In this situation, we need to bring to the fore today the issue of the united form and strength of humankind because humankind has no choice but to unite to eradicate the corona virus. Unity and solidarity among all people is needed to deal with the Corona attack. No one will be able to defeat the united humankind because in the midst of unity lies the desired strength, peace and blessings.

The Corona period has given us a new opportunity to realize that our Creator is one and the same and that we too are the creation of the same Creator, the same nation and that is the human race. It has been narrated in the Holy Qur'an that say, Allah is one and He is Self-Sufficient (Al Quranul Karim; 112:1). Just as the corona virus attacks all people, the great Creator's mercy is also on all people, regardless of race or religion. Whereas the Creator of the world is one, the human race must also be one and united. The great Creator has said, "Hold the rope of Allah together and do not be separated from each other." (Al Quranul Karim; 3:103).

Knowledge, Wisdom and Love

According to the rules, the sun rises on the eastern skyline every day, but in the language of history, the Christian sixth century is called the “age of darkness”. That was the darkness of ignorance. Ending that darkness, the radiant sun of Islam rose. As a result, the door of destiny of humanity was opened and the darkness of ignorance was removed from the society. The journey of Islam started mainly through the aphorism of reading and teaching. So the beacon that Islam lit to eradicate the ongoing darkness was the light of education and knowledge. Islam came in the Dark Ages. While the light of knowledge radiated, wisdom was associated with that knowledge; and with wisdom came responsibility, reforms and universal love. Then, due to the implementation of all this in a short period of time, the age of darkness became the greatest age in human history. (Alavi, 2018) There is no comparison of that era with any other eras in terms of civilization, culture, security and philanthropy. Knowledge, wisdom and love of that golden age are needed again to deal with the Corona pandemic and to protect people, society and civilization.

The Cost of Our Mistakes

The ongoing corona aggression around the world has given us new food for thoughts. (Rashid, 2020) Corona has opened the curtains of our eyes and expanded the world of thought. The world’s superpower’s state thinking, state-management, governance, production and stockpiling of lethal weapons, supply of lethal weapons to the candidate countries, and the worldly affairs, demonstrate the aristocracy and insane tendencies of the superpower to influence other countries. Atomic bombs and arbitrary use of technology cannot be the only safeguards for any country and nation. The wise and policy-making quarters of the world are busy preparing all the visible materials of worldly pleasures, but they have failed to take any timely and effective initiative to destroy the invisible enemy like the Corona virus. They have forgotten the vital issues of human health, life and survival by engaging in the shortsighted and suicidal competitions of technological excellence and power. If the ruling class had been thoughtful and humanistic, the issue of human health would have been a priority for them and they would have devoted themselves to the development of this sector. They focused on protecting human health more than atomic bombs and lethal weapons, and they invested more in this sector. We are responsible for this mistake and we are paying price for it.

Human Health in Islam

Islam has given utmost importance to human life and human health (Rahman, 2018). From its inception to the present day, Islam has set an unprecedented example in the practice of medical science and in the protection of human health. The messages of the Holy Qur'an and the way of life of the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) have given us the necessary instructions and guidance in this regard. According to Islam, good health is a great ‘blessing’ given by the Creator to human beings. So man should make arrangements for the best preservation of the blessings given by the Creator. In the same way, this good health given to man by the Creator is a great 'deposit'. And it is the mandatory duty of man to take the utmost care of the deposit given by the Creator. This ‘good health’ in the form of a blessing and deposit of the great Creator is of two kinds: physical and mental. Islam calls for equal protection of both physical and mental health. According to the hadith of *Bukhari Sharif*, most people are quite unaware of the two blessings: the first is good health and the second is leisure (Bukhari, 82:6412). One and a half thousand years ago, Islam instructed people to formulate and follow health rules so that they do not forget health awareness under any circumstance. Everything in today's modern healthcare system is in harmony and coordinated with the guidelines given by Islam. In another hadith of *Bukhari Sharif*, it is said, “every human being has the right to his body.” (Bukhari, 2:52). This right of the body is to provide health care. According to the hadith of *Tirmizi Sharif*, on the Day of Judgment, people will be the first to be asked about good health. The Lord will say, did I not give you good health? On that day, we will face question about good health; therefore, we should continue to make every effort to protect human health and continue its development.

Muslim Contributions to Medical Science

The importance of education and knowledge in Islam is immense. (Bahauddin, 2017) Medical science is one of the major branches of global knowledge. Due to the special importance given to medical science, Muslims studied this subject extensively and gained proficiency in it. (Qaiyum, 2019) Medical science is one of the most important and miraculous aspects of the *Holy Quran* in which both physical and spiritual healings come at the same time. Keith Leon Moore, a professor of the University of Toronto in Canada and a renowned embryologist, said at a seminar on "Quran and Medical Sciences" in Tehran on February 18, 2013, that “medical researchers are discovering new things and realizing that it already has been said in the *Holy Quran*. Inspired by the Islamic way of life, world-renowned Muslim medical scientists have taken this path. Ali

At-Tabari (839-920 AD), Al-Razi (862-925 AD), Al-Zahrawi (963-1013 AD), Ibn Sina (980-1037 AD), Al-Mawsili (996-1020 AD), Ibn Rushd (1126-1198 AD), Ibn Nafis (1208-1288 AD) and others names and contributions in the World History of Medical Sciences are particularly significant. The proper status of a physician is recognized in Islam. Similarly, Islam has not skimmed on the evaluation of medical science as a profession. One of the adjective-names of the Almighty Allah is 'Tabib' or Physician; the word "Physician" is chosen from this name. This indicates how high the statuses of medical profession and doctors are in Islam. (Khasru, 2020)

The Sad Reality of Corona

The whole world is affected by the corona virus today. The visible world and the inhabitants of the earth are facing the cruel enmity of an invisible tiny virus. This enemy is devouring us unknowingly although we are taking the utmost cautions. This enemy is playing the role of a ruthless killer among us, even though we are trying our best to survive. The blows of this enemy are very painful and tragic. The enemy is taking away father from son or son from father, mother from daughter or daughter from mother, husband from wife or wife from husband, and so forth. Today, the world humanity is struggling to control this invisible, tiny but cruel and deadly enemy. The invisible virus called Covid-19 is a death knell for people today. It is a single virus, has a lot of infectivity and the virus is invisible. Our Great Lord is One, He has Infinite Power and He is also invisible. Belief in the unseen 'Allah' is the core part of our faith, He is omnipotence and our ultimate shelter. Unable to bear the horrors of the corona, the Italian prime minister Giuseppe Conte (born 1964) said, 'We are making every effort in the world; this time we are looking to the sky for help'. (Munshi, 2020) And the owner of the sky is the Almighty Lord; to whom we will all return. He is the only one who can provide the best and most effective cooperation to end this terrible disaster in the world; we are dependent on Him.

The Inevitability of the Pandemic

Many people are talking a lot about the current outbreak of the corona virus. The gist of most statements is that the pandemic was inevitable because even though it is due to the corona virus, it is the real result of many long-term accumulated irregularities and crimes of the people. This is in line with the proclamation of the Holy Qur'an where the Almighty Allah said, 'All the calamities that befell the water and the land are the earnings of human hands, let them taste some of what they have done; this is so that they may

return soon.' (Al Quranul Karim; 30:41) To return means to return to the path of human welfare from the irregularities that have been involved for a long time; because what he is doing is just a disaster for humanity. Theologians, scientists, environmentalists, pathologists, and epidemiologists today say that today's pandemic is the product of the collective sin of humankind. This catastrophe is the result of a long-running injustice to nature and the environment, driven by unplanned urbanization and ambitious industrialization. Through global warming, destruction of biodiversity, rising sea levels, the impact of green settlements, depletion of the weight layer and deforestation instead of green forestry we have thrown ourselves to the ultimate loss. Today we are suffering the cruel consequences of the growing greed of the people, the mad desire for so-called development, the heinous pollution of advanced civilizations, the indiscriminate killing of wild animals and the gross negligence in ensuring the essential regulators of human health.

Social Picture of Bangladesh during Corona

The corona virus originated in Wuhan, China. Gradually it spread to various countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and America. According to official data, the virus has spread to Bangladesh since March 2020; subsequently then, a rampage has been going on in this country. Corona's attack has immediately changed the social scenery of this country. The Corona virus has had a devastating effect on the psyche of people in this country where family ties, social coexistence and religious sentiments are the norm. People are no longer drawn to people, do not want to recognize, do not want to stand next to each other; They are descending into a visible antisocial competition to hide themselves even from loved ones. The real situation has reached such a melancholy that the son is not serving his own father, the daughter is not honoring her mother; even standing far away is witnessing the funeral of a loved one who died of a corona attack. (Khokan, 2020) It is as if a rehearsal of resurrection is going on in the world! The horrible image of the Last day of Judgment mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith, we see its manifestation every day in the time of corona. On the Day of Judgment, people will think only of themselves, will do everything to keep themselves safe and will always be busy to save themselves. (Tirmizi: 2434) We had to accept the misfortune of seeing these scenes in the world due to corona infection. Corona may go away but the horrors of the Day of Judgment will remain. So we have no respite from corona's affect; rather, we should be innocent and blameless by living an honest and noble life. We can take this lesson from the corona disaster in the interest of humanity.

Corona has taken a different form in the social life of Bangladesh. In this horrific humanitarian catastrophe, where medical services are supposed to become more mature and humane, the mercantile attitudes of the medical and hospital authorities are becoming stronger in most cases. Even in the case of corona testing, we have seen completely unexpected incidents like the use of dishonest methods. This has seriously damaged our image and reputation at home and abroad. As a nation, we are very unfortunate that during the holy month of Ramadan, commodity prices fall all over the Muslim world, even in non-Muslim countries, and in our country it is multiplied several times; but more than ninety percent of Muslims live in this country! Everywhere today is a rehearsal for unethical business. Even in the midst of this catastrophe of Corona, it is incredibly unbelievable and inhuman. Will these traders of ours ever realize that it is not the work of any human being to do unjust business by taking advantage of human misery; at least in this perilous time of the Corona pandemic, it cannot be expected from any human being. The best friend of humanity Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that honest and faithful businessmen will be with the prophets, martyrs, honest and virtuous people in the life of hereafter. (Daily Hadith Online, n.d) Yet we see that most of our traders are not honest, humane and trustworthy; rather, they are opportunist and always looking for unfairly making profits.

Corona and Human Character

Corona reveals the degradation of human character more nakedly. From the flag bearers of the superpowers to the general people, no one has been able to fulfill even the slightest appeal of character excellence. I will not be the cause of the loss of others, no one will suffer because of me and none of my activities or actions will prolong the ongoing pandemic—the number of people who adore such notions is also gradually declining. This realization is a very initial part of the essential elements of human character. The Prophet (peace be upon him) appeared on earth with the aim of giving a complete form of human character. He said, "The best of you is the one whose character is sweet and the best." He added, "I have been sent to earth to provide for the perfection of human character." (Islamweb.net, 2012) But what we are seeing is that among all, whether white or black, East or West, educated or uneducated, degradation is being observed more than characteristic superiority. The number of people who are not aware of the minimum hygiene is not small. Carelessness, arrogance, irresponsibility and lack of common sense of the people are the negative features of their character; which they have been accustomed and practicing for a long time. So today, we have to create the quality of responsibility among all of us for

a pandemic-free and healing world. From the world leaders to ordinary citizens everyone has to fulfill the requirements of character and moral excellence.

Epidemics and Pandemics in History: Causes and Actions

The history of epidemic or pandemic outbreaks is not new. In the past the epidemics and pandemics took place in different parts of the world with different names. Cholera, tuberculosis, smallpox, swine flu or Ebola have plagued humankind at various times. (Pandemic 2022) Covid-19 is the virus that has now infected the entire world in the wake of the pandemic. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said about the epidemic that when the amount of obscene activities increases in a society and it happens in a very public way, the epidemic occurs there (Ibn Majah: 4019). While the epidemic was going on, he instructed that you should not go to the area where the epidemic was going on and you should not leave the area where the epidemic was coming. There is no better and more scientific way to prevent the spread of epidemics and pandemics. Pathologists and medical experts are repeatedly talking about hand washing to protect oneself from corona attacks. Islam has made it obligatory to pray five times a day; there are also other prayers. Before the start of the prayers, some parts of the body are required to be cleansed with water; one of the main aspects of which is to wash the hands. And with this cleaning, not only the corona virus, but also many other dangers are protected.

People of many religions live in the world. However, among these religions, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism have the highest number of followers (Prithibite Kon Dharmer Anushari Kato, 2019). Muslims are being persecuted in various countries including Palestine, Syria, Iraq; Women, children and the elderly are no exception. Helpless children are dying of indescribable oppression; and when a dying child says, "I will tell my God everything," Muslim rulers indulge in the pleasures of the harem. Christendom shrouded in inhumanity with unimaginable racism; to put an end to all this their priests are silent! Church worship is important to them! The world has seen the silence of their priests and rulers even when the work of depriving civil rights in the name of amending civil law and demolishing mosques (Kahani, 2017) is going on in the Pilgrimage land of Hindu; although they believe in the philosophy of Om Shanti! "Non-violence is the ultimate religion" (Bhikku, 2013) is one of the essence of Buddhism. But a class of them who oppress people of other religions, carry out massacres and make all arrangements for deportation. (bbc.com, 2018) Even then their monks and saints chose solitary pursuits in temples or pagodas; they do not come forward to protect endangered humanity. All

unfortunate thoughts of ours during the Corona catastrophe are not completely unfounded.

One of the sad realities of today's world is that some people have become terribly self-arrogant. God warns people that pride is my cloak; (Muslim, 2013) Let no one else exaggerate. But today people are forgetting their identity by showing arrogance. Undoubtedly man is “Ashraful Makhluqat” (the best of creation). Man should have manifested that superiority through his actions. Otherwise, the best man is thrown into the lowest level of creation. Whenever man fails to fulfill the responsibilities given to him, the great Creator becomes dissatisfied and lowers his position. (Al Quranul Karim; 95:5) In addition, many kinds of dangers come down on human society. The main reason for these disasters and plagues is that man should not forget his responsibilities and should not engage in the activities forbidden by the Absolute Creator. The fact of the matter is that if one commits crime and wickedness without following the instructions of the Creator, he is bound to suffer the same punishment as the previous people. (Rahman, 2020) That punishment is not only in the hereafter, but also in this world; there are no people who can deal with that. Today's corona reality is just a sign of worldly suffering.

Optimism and Conclusion

The Corona virus, which runs the global aggression, has created a terrible situation everywhere. Of course, from this situation, we are constantly getting the opportunity to dwell in the depths of different, exceptional and varied ideas. Even the extreme poverty of our thoughts, conscience and feeling of consciousness is being reflected in the mirror of cruel reality. Through all this, we hope that the place of self-realization of the Corona period will take the form of a sensitivity. In this situation, the great Creator of the world is repeatedly calling us to come back with remorse; (Al Quranul Karim; 24:31) repent with a sincere heart. (Al Quranul Karim; 66:8) And in the event of a catastrophe, be hopeful of the grace of the Absolute Lord. Never despair of His unflinching mercy. (Al Quranul Karim; 39:53) Our hope is that, the earth will be healed again, manifested in its glory and its inhabitants will have the opportunity to roam safely; everywhere a new look and unprecedented atmosphere will be created. It is the message of Almighty Allah that gives us hope, ‘And soon your Lord will give you grace that will satisfy you’. (Al Quranul Karim; 93:5)

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