

Shari'ah Status of Precautionary Measures against Pandemic Diseases (Before and After the Spread of Disease)

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Abstract

Islamic Shari'ah promotes the human nature. Every commandment of Islam is easy approachable for its followers physically as well as psychologically. Islam does not advise even a single ritual practice which is harmful for human body. For, one of five basic objectives of Islamic Shari'ah is to save humanity. In normal as well as in some odd situations, Islam teaches different safety measures. In a situation when contagious or pandemic disease outbreaks, Islam advises its followers to adopt the required safety precautionary measures. Trust in Allah is also a primary faith of Islamic Shari'ah but different safety measures have also been introduced by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). This paper is to highlight the safety measures introduced by Islam. The main objective of this study is to manipulate the Islamic strategy of self-defense in a pandemic disease. The basic research question of this study is, what is the status of precautionary measures against pandemic diseases? A descriptive research method will be used for this study.

Keywords: Self -Defense, Precautions, Human Nature, Epidemic, Disease

Literature Review

A lot of books and research papers on contagious, pandemic and fatal diseases (about their safety measures) have been written in different languages. Different types of instructions on different websites about COVID-19 and its precautionary measures have been given. For this study, English, Urdu and Arabic data was consulted. Alan Randall wrote a book with the name of "Risk and Precautions" published by Cambridge University Press in 2011. This book contains a lot of knowledge about expected dangers and its precautionary measures. A book in English language with title "Health as a Human Right in Islam" written by Dr M.H. Al-Khayat, this book was published WHO head office of Cairo (Egypt) in 2004. It contains basic hygenical tips and safety measures told

by Islamic Shari'ah. A book in Urdu was consulted was titled "*Kurona Virus aur Shari Masail o Tadbeer*" by Rana Muhammad Shafiq Pasrori (Member Islamic Ideological Council Pakistan) Publish by Fix Dot Printer Royal Park Lahore. All major Hadith books keep heap of knowledge about personal as well as social security. The official website of WHO has a lot of information about COVID-19. A research paper with title "*Occupational Safety and Health (Osh) From Islamic Perspective: A Conceptual Study*" was written by Afifah Binti Ismail and Mohd Shahril Bin Ahmad Razimi which was published in "Journal of Islamic Economics and Business" is full of safety measures told by in while doing a job or during working.

1. Precautionary Safety Measures, an Introduction

Safety precautions are actually some preplanned necessary steps which are taken to save somebody from expected dangerous situations. Such actions are taken to maintain the present condition. These safety precautions are not same in different situations. These can be different according to the nature of expected dangers. So, a set of safety instructions are followed according to the profession. These safety measures hold a number of benefits for a person as well as for whole the society. "Safety and health aspects if managed by the employer efficiently and strategically can boost the productivity and profit thus lessen the organization costs."¹ Safety measures of a doctor will be different from an engineer. A passenger will be advised different safety precautions when he is travelling in a ship and will be different when he is in an Aeroplane. In a disease; contagious or epidemic, these safety measures are different also. Everybody related to medical field is advised to follow a set of instructions. Especially, in some kinds of contagious disease which can be easily transferred from one person to others. Some strict actions are performed for safety purposes. In present condition of COVID-19, different steps are being taken for public safety. Hands are being washed again and again to prevent the germs or viruses from spreading. Mouth or nose are being covered by masks to save the respiratory system from harmful germs. For this reason, surgical gloves are used to touch a person directly. A lot of others steps are taken to keep one's body saved from the disease in which a person is afflicted. "When an activity raises threats of harm to the environment or human health, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically."² In different fields, different safety principles are taught. So, these principles hold great importance for security purposes. Even a single unpleasant incident does not occur while performing the routine work but safety measures or safety principles are considered necessary to be followed for everyone.

*"Similarly, health care workers of human medicine should also adhere strictly to the standard preventive measures like avoiding any form of direct contact with people; either through greetings, hugging or shaking of hands and large gatherings, avoid undue contact with infected items."*³

2. International SOPs about Precautions or Safety Measures

In these days, there is an epidemical situation due to COVID-19, all over the world. For this purpose, world Health Organization and other international institutions which are working for human safety have issued different precautionary measures. To wear mask regularly, to wash hands again and again (for 20 seconds) after touching something, to avoid shaking hands or to maintain proper social distance from others are general precautionary measures. This is all to keep everybody away from a fatal disease. "If COVID-19 is spreading in your community, stay safe by taking some simple precautions, such as physical distancing, wearing a mask, keeping rooms well ventilated, avoiding crowds, cleaning your hands, and coughing into a bent elbow or tissue."⁴ So, on national as well as on international level, for public or personal safety, a number of instructions have been determined. Especially in current situation of COVID-19, every person or country is following the advised precautionary measures of WHO. People are being affected by this virus in those areas in which these safety measures are being neglected. Also, people those are not taking it serious causing the harms and loss of precious lives of People. Millions of people have been died because of this fatal disease in last one and half year.

3. Level of Reliance on Allah (Trust in Allah) and Status of Precautionary Measures in Islam

Islam teaches its followers to trust in Allah at extreme level. No something or somebody can harm a person and no one can give benefit even this authority is possessed only by Allah. "There is no might or power except with Allah."⁵ In Islam, everybody is taught to keep a firm belief that Allah is the creator of this universe and He is handling all its matters. He holds the power to feed all the creatures. He grants lives and deaths to every animate. The growth of a man and all other species in this universe is happened according to the will of Allah. Even the movement of a leaf cannot happen without His permission. "Lo! your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then mounted He the Throne. He covereth the night with the day, which is in haste to follow it, and hath made the sun and the moon and the stars subservient by His command. His verily is all creation and commandment Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!"⁶ For every Muslim, this belief is advised and it is one of the basic beliefs to become a Muslim or to sustain one's Islam in one's character. This belief is necessary for every Islamic follower in every favorable as well as in unfavorable situation. This belief makes a person brave and uncompromising in every kind of circumstance. In a critical situation, when an enemy invades, in some natural disasters or some kinds of fatal diseases when they are outbroken, Islam advises its followers to rely only on Allah's will. If there are some unfavorable circumstances, one day Allah will change them into favorable. One day Allah will resolve every issue. "So, pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult with them upon

the conduct of affairs. And when thou art resolved, then put thy trust in Allah. Lo! Allah loveth those who put their trust (in Him)."⁷

Holding this belief does not mean that one ought to ignore the worldly sources. Actually, the reliance on Allah means to trust in Allah's support after using the materialistic sources. A lot of precautionary safety measures have been introduced in Islam. Islam does not allow a person or its follower to depend only on a faith of trust in Allah but it is a belief and practically, a man or a nation has to prepare the necessary equipments in every situation. It is true that nobody can harm a man if Allah wants. To use proper materialistic sources have also been referred in Islam. With this belief, Allah has ordered the Muslims to prepare force and power against the enemy. "Make ready for them all thou canst of (armed) force and of horses tethered."⁸ Islam not only promotes the spiritual aspect of man's life but also emphasizes on personal hygienical factor. To maintain health or to save oneself from different diseases, it gives a lot of valuable tips. "Islam places equal emphasis on health promotion and health protection."⁹

Like this in a disease (epidemic or pandemic), Islamic actual teachings are to keep trust in Allah after adopting the different materialistic precautionary measures. So, these precautionary measures have primary status in Islam. Many times, different safety measures were adopted in the lives of Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and by pious companions practically to fight against an enemy or to face every odd situation. A religion is revealed to facilitate the human being. Islam has same objectives as other religions have. One of many objectives of Islam or Islamic Shari'ah is to save humanity. Islam does not allow anybody to adopt some harmful activities and does not let the people to be harmed under the shade of a so-called belief or a ritual practice to get some spiritual goals. Many times, this had been repeated that one should not engage in an activity which can be dangerous for personal or social security.

*"Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah, and be not cast by your own hands to ruin; and do good. Lo! Allah loveth the beneficent."*¹⁰

In Islam before and after the spread of a disease, precautionary measures have primary status. Islamic precautionary measures are of two types; practical and verbal prays.

4 Safety Measures prescribed in Islam

Islam is a universal religion. Its every commandment is everlasting and appealable for people of every region. In Islam, for public safety, especially in some contagious diseases (epidemic or pandemic) different precautionary or safety measures have been introduced. From these precautionary measures everybody can get benefits and can save his life by adopting them in some specific conditions. Some of them can be discussed with the following points.

4.1 Physical Purification or Cleanliness

Not only on special occasions but every time and in normal situations, Islam advised its followers to maintain cleanliness personally as well as in

surrounding. For this purpose, the cleanliness has been declared a part of Iman. "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Purification is half the Iman."¹¹ Physically, a man who keeps himself clean all the time actually saves himself from a lot of diseases. Especially in these days when there is a critical situation of COVID-19 all over the world. People are advised to wash hands again and again for 20 seconds by WHO. Also, people are recommended to sustain purification to keep the virus at arm's length. In Islamic Shari'ah, every Muslim has been advised to get cleanliness before starting the prayer and it is one of the fundamental aspects of Islam. So, to take bath if it is necessary and to make ablution (*Wudu*) before every prayer has been declared necessary. While doing ablution, it has been advised by Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to wash every part for three times. (Washing three times a part, takes approximately 20 seconds) "The Prophet would perform wudu for every Salat, whether he was in state of purity or not in a state of purity."¹² This concept is being promoted by WHO in these days to wash hands again and again for 20 seconds. Actually, this action has already been advised by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to his followers before 14 centuries. This action kills germs and viruses and prevent from spreading from one person to other persons. For this reason, for a person who remain all the time in ablution, is actually following the SOPs to save himself from epidemic or contagious diseases. He washes hands, cleans his mouth, throat, nose, forehead and feet. Repetition of this action, not only kills the present germs but also prevent the growth of new germs as well as stop from transferring to others.

4.2 Covering Face with a Piece of Cloth or Wearing Mask

Even in a normal situation, everybody has been advised to cover his nose and mouth while coughing or sneezing. The basic reason behind this strategy is to prevent the germs or viruses from transferring, from one person to another person. This social manner was also adopted by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) every time. "The Prophet (ﷺ) would sneeze, he would cover his face with his hand or with his garment, and muffle the sound with it."¹³ This action was done in normal situation and every follower was advised to act upon it. This is a beautify Islamic precautionary manners to save others from contagious particles. When some contagious or epidemic disease has been outbroken then face or nose is covered. In both cases (at the time of sneezing and to save from a pandemic disease) the reason is same and it is to save others or to prevent the germs from transformation. So, covering face in some kind of gathering with a piece of cloth or wearing a face mask is necessary for personal hygiene or for other's safety. In these days, mostly Islamic scholars have issued the verdicts to offer prayer wearing mask by following the CVOVID-19 SOP declared by WHO. Now practically, Muslims are offering prayers by wearing face mask just to save from this fatal disease and to prevent its scattering. So, masks should be used in public places or in a place where suitable social distance is not possible among people. "For this

purpose, the combined use of respiratory mask, protective visor and gloves constitutes a useful mechanical barrier to be adopted in work activities where it is not always possible to maintain the recommended safety distances."¹⁴

4.3 Social Distancing and Benefits of Quarantine in Islam

Social distancing and secluded way of life give many spiritual, social and personal benefits in some ways. Before bestowing prophethood, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) used to spend many times in such a way. So, He went to Hira cave, worshiped there and used to meditate about His nation. "When Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was nearly forty, he had been wanting to pass long hours in retirement meditating and speculating over all aspects of creation around him."¹⁵ If this style is adopted after fulfilling the social responsibilities, is permitted in Islam. It gives many fruitful consequences for a person who is adopting loneliness for constructive purposes. Even permanent seclusion is not allowed in Islam. For safety, in some pandemic diseases, this partial seclusion or social distance is beneficial for every person of a society where there that epidemic disease has been outbroken. By Holy Prophet (ﷺ), it was also advised that one should not enter in that area in which a contagious or pandemic disease has been spread or some affected people are there. So, it is very useful precautionary safety measure of Islam to save the normal people. This is also a very beneficial strategy of Islam for public. "Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "If you hear that it (plague) has broken out in a land, do not go to it; but if it breaks out in a land where you are present, do not go out escaping from it."¹⁶ Both types of precautionary measures have been told; for affected people and for normal people. Affected people should not leave that area and normal people should not enter in that area. So, to prevent from spreading the germs or viruses, it is necessary to obey this golden principle of Islam. This is an evidence of social distancing of Islam in a contagious disease. In another Hadith, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) also advised to keep distance from an affected people. Even this was also told that by nature a disease holds no power to be a contagious but as a safety precaution it is done. It is necessary that after having the belief that Allah is the best preserver, one should keep himself away from an affected man or a patient. "Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "(There is) no 'Adwa (no contagious disease is conveyed without Allah's permission). nor is there any bad omen (from birds), nor is there any Hamah, nor is there any bad omen in the month of Safar, and one should run away from the leper as one runs away from a lion."¹⁷

4.4 Avoid Shaking Hands in some Particular Situation

Shaking hands to each other is one of the major causes of COVID-19 scattering. It is the basic instruction referred by WHO to avoid shaking hands. But in an Islamic society, it is the style of greeting when two persons meet to each other. It is called *Musafaha* in literal meanings. "Narrated Qatada: I asked Anas, "Was it a custom of the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) to shake hands with one another?" He said, "Yes."¹⁸ But in special cases, it can be nullified. Also, when some contagious disease has been outbroken or a person is infected by such type of disease

and from shake hands germs and viruses can transmit from patient to normal persons. This is the lenient attitude of Islamic Shari'ah to avoid shaking hands in this critical situation. Whenever an individual or a group of people had to accept Islam, they were taken pledge of allegiance with putting the hands on the hand of Prophet (ﷺ) or His messenger. But in many cases for public safety, this process was simplified. When *Thaqif* tribe came to accept Islam and to submit their will before the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Among them a person was infected of Leprosy. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) permitted him to not to come close or to put his hand for pledge of allegiance. Because, it was the matter of public safety. From his touching hands and after touching others hands, could cause germs transformation or infection. So, the infected person was kept at arm's length to save others and a necessary process was changed just for public safety. "Among the delegation of *Thaqif* there was a man who suffered from leprosy. The Prophet sent word to him saying: 'Go back, for I have accepted your pledge.'"¹⁹

4.5 Separation of Affected People

Islam enhances the sociability of a man by its teachings. It advises its followers to keep in touch with one another all the time. The basic purpose of this connection is to cooperate one another, to give helping hand to needy persons, to keep vigilant to their financial situations. This is the reason many ritual practices are performed in gathering shape (In one day, five times Muslims gather in a Masjid). But in some abnormal situations, Islam allows its followers to perform worship activities in individual forms. In some special cases, Islam also allows to keep distance from those persons or animals which have been affected by a contagious disease. "Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: The cattle (sheep, cows, camels, etc.) suffering from a disease should not be mixed up with healthy cattle, (or said: "Do not put a patient with a healthy person). " (as a precaution)."²⁰ For this reason, Islamic scholars have issued the verdicts to make limited the ritual practices or to postpone the religious meetings all over the world due to COVID-19. It is also the demand of international SOP to keep social distance. "The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) on Tuesday said that in light of the fast-spreading novel coronavirus, all political and religious gatherings should be postponed "immediately"."²¹ This is also a very fruitful precautionary policy of Islam. About animals, it has been advised that sick and healthy animals should not be mixed. There should be proper distance to save those who are healthy and normal. On the behalf of this Hadith, many interpreters have concluded that human being hold better position as compared to animals and their safety is more valuable. So, for public health, patients or affected people should be kept separated from the healthy people if there is danger or infection.

4.6 Islamic Precautionary Prays for Fatal Diseases and Upcoming Dangers

Power or status of prays in Islam cannot be neglected. A pray is itself a kind of worship. For multiple purposes, people pray to God. For prosperity,

spiritual purification, safety and ultimate success. In Islamic Shari'ah, prays are also used as precautionary measures. Everybody is advised to pray to Allah almighty. For fatal disease or other harmful things, a lot of prays (Wazaif) have been told by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to his followers. He also used to pray Allah to save himself from evil forces and further preached His followers to recite the Wazaif and prays for personal safety from losses and difficulties. Different prays have been mentioned in the Hadith books those are used by Muslims.

Holy prophet (ﷺ) was an active and brave person but He used to pray to Allah to save him from laziness (in advance) as a precaution. Also, he used to pray to get safety from cowardice and mental deterioration. These were asked from Allah for precautionary measures and it was just to teach the people to beg from Allah in advance and to save themselves from expected dangers. "O Allah, I seek refuge with you from laziness. I seek refuge with You from cowardice. I seek refuge with you from senility. I seek refuge with You from miserliness."²²

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَتَعَوَّذُ يَقُولُ " اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْكَسَلِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْجُبْنِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَزَمِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبُخْلِ -

Another precautionary pray has been mentioned in different books of Hadith. One a hurricane covered the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and His companions. At that time for their safety, they prayed to Allah to become in the refuge of Allah. With their prayers, they recite the last two Surahs of Holy Qur'an, about these two surahs, it is said that these are *Muawaztain* and are best remedy for a person to save him from satanic forces and negativities. "Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) between al-Juhfah and al-Abwa', a wind and intense darkness enveloped us, whereupon the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) began to seek refuge in Allah, reciting: "I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn," and "I seek refuge in the Lord of men."²³

إِذْ عَشِيَّتْنَا رِيحٌ وَظُلْمَةٌ شَدِيدَةٌ فَجَعَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَتَعَوَّذُ بِ-
- [أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْعَلَقِ] وَ [أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ]

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) used to seek refuge from four main disease as precaution. This was prophetic precautionary act and to teach its followers to seek refuge from these dangerous diseases and abnormalities. So, in his routine prays, He used to pray to Allah to get security from leprosy, madness, elephantiasis and evil diseases. "The Prophet (ﷺ) used to say: "O Allah, I seek refuge in Thee from leprosy, madness, elephantiasis, and evil diseases."²⁴

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبُرْصِ وَالْجُنُونِ وَالْجُدَامِ وَمِنْ سَيِّئِ الْأَسْقَامِ -

Generally, from evil forces and expected dangers, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) used to recite many *Wazaif* and prays. Some of them were fixed after Fajar and Maghrib prayers. These *Wazaif* were not only recited by Holy Prophet (ﷺ) but also these are gifts which were granted to all the Muslims. Every Muslim has been advised to recite these *Wazaif* after Fajar

and Maghrib prayers. About these Wazaif, multi-benefits have been told. Allah saves people through these Wazaif from fatal diseases, harmful insects and negative (evil) forces. On daily bases, the following Wazaif.

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ-

*"I seek refuge in the Perfect Words of Allah from the evil of what He has created."*²⁵

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ لَمْ يَضُرَّهُ شَيْءٌ.

*"The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Whoever says in the Name of Allah, with whose name nothing on earth or in heaven can cause harm, and He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing, nothing will harm him.'"*²⁶

The above two prays are especially being recited as safety precautionary measures from COVID-19 in these days. Mostly Islamic scholars have recommended the Muslims to recite these Wazaif after every prayer especially after Fajar and Maghrib prayers. The Muslims who have firm belief in Allah that He is the supreme power and no one can harm if there is support of Allah behind every action. With the help of the above two prays (Wazaif), one can save him, his family and whole the society from COVID-19 as well as from every harmful virus or germ. Another precautionary measure told by Holy Prophet (ﷺ) that one who sees an infected or afflicted person and recite the following prays, he will not be afflicted in that disease or affliction in which the said person has been involved. "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Whoever sees an afflicted person then says: 'All praise is due to Allah who saved me from that which He has afflicted you with, and blessed me greatly over many of those whom He has created, he shall not be struck by that affliction.'"²⁷

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " مَنْ رَأَى مُبْتَلًى فَقَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي عَافَانِي مِمَّا ابْتَلَاكَ بِهِ وَفَضَّلَنِي عَلَى

كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ تَفْضِيلًا لَمْ يُصِبْهُ ذَلِكَ الْبَلَاءُ".

Conclusions

Islam is a religion revealed to facilitate the human being. There is not a single practice or belief which is against human benefits. In Islam, trust in God (Allah) is one of basic beliefs. But reliance on God (Allah) does not mean to ignore the materialistic sources. In Islamic Shari'ah, after using all material sources trust in Allah or reliance on Allah has been referred. In some special cases, a lenient policy has been used for every ritual practice. For public health or safety, a commandment or style of practice can be modified. In some pandemic (contagious) diseases, Islam gives relaxation to everyone to prefer the hygienical instructions as compared to Shari'ah rules. A lot of precautionary safety measures have been determined in Islamic Shari'ah to maintain public health or to save them from a fatal disease. In the running situation of COVID-19, Islam also helps people to become save and secured. In advance, different materialistic and non-materialistic safety instructions

and precautionary measures have been presented. From these instructions, Muslims are getting benefits. With the help of Allah almighty, the ratio of infected Muslims is low all over the world as compared to non-Muslims. Islamic precautionary measures are harmonious to human nature so on international level (by WHO) and on national level (in different countries), the Islamic concept of cleanliness is being promoted and Islamic instructions (verbal or practical) are being followed by non-Muslims to fight against this fatal disease.



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