The Acculturation of Thâ’ûn Paradigm and Pandemic in Islam
Based on Nash and Historical Perspective

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ABSTRACT
This study is an effort to create a new paradigm about the global pandemic by analyzing nash or the texts of the Quran, Hadith, Atsar, and the statements of early Islamic scholars. The content analysis methods used in interpreting the Quran, the criticism of Hadith and Atsar, and the historical studies in early Islam have found that Thâ’ûn is the global name for a pandemic that has hit the Islamic world. The advances in science and technology have visualized today's Thâ’ûn into the classification of names, types, and variants, but it is still globally accumulated as Thâ’ûn. The management of Thâ’ûn since the early Islamic period in the form of orders, directions, policies, and implementations has also been accommodated by the current generation, other countries, and governments with some modifications. This study also discovers that the major incidents that cause death have significantly and greatly affected the new normal order in humanity and social and Islamic law.

Keywords: Thâ’ûn, Pandemic, Management, Islamic History, New Paradigm

1. INTRODUCTION

Essentially, humans always have social contact with other humans, explore each other's problems, and feel other humans' joy, suffering, and sadness. Social contacts in various spaces and regions always have a positive or negative impact on humans' psychological, sociological, and historical aspects; it also contributes to the spread of a pandemic. History has recorded the types of pandemics and diseases that spread through social interactions, such as the population density of an area and migration between regions since pre-Islamic, post-Islamic, and modern times.

Thâ’ûn has been recorded as an infectious disease that causes mass deaths. It was once generally categorized as Thâ’ûn. However, advances in science can detect the cause and even name different types of Thâ’ûn. Prophet Muhammad PBUH, when he returned from the Tabûk war, once stated "idzâ waqa’a al-Thâ’ûn bi ardh wa antum bihâ falâ takhrujû minhâ, waidzâ kuntum bighairihâ falâ tuqaddimû ‘alaihâ”[1].

The word “ardh” is mentioned in the form of nakîrah, which emphasizes the term “general” and means “wherever” it is. Therefore, Thâ’ûn can be said to be a common problem. It is a global problem felt by all humankind in any world.

The modern world records the types of pandemics with different names and different health effects, and those who have been confirmed died from the virus. Plague, Smallpox, Cholera, Spanish Flu, Asian Flu, Hong Kong Flu, HIV/AIDS, SARS, Swine Flu, Ebola are the pandemics that occurred in the past, and some have even metamorphosed into new variants [2]. The same goes for MERS and Covid-19 [3]. This variety of viruses played a role in the evolution of the pandemic, along with human immunity [4]. For example, Cholera is a pandemic that first appeared in Jassore, India, between 1817-1823 and reached its seventh wave in 1961. It has been infecting up to four million people per year [5]. SARS first appeared in Guangdong, China, then revealed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2003. This virus was first
found in a location where people sell and serve "exotic" food, which is not proper to consume or edible according to most people [6]. Likewise, the Corona Virus disease 19 (Covid-19) pandemic was found in China, particularly in Wuhan, Hubei Province [7].

The deaths caused by Thâ’ûn or plague are fantastic due to each plague’s various characteristics and causes, individual or region. But, on the other hand, Thâ’ûn creates positive and objective nuances because of people’s high empathy and concern for others. Al-Suhailî said that the origin of the naming of a Thâ’ûn in Syâm as ‘Amwâs is the grief over death; thus, it makes humans care to each other [8].

The published research on thâ’un, plague, and pandemics, mainly on their relation to the Islamic world, is rare. Since the world has suffered from Covid for only two years, it has not become the researchers’ ultimate attention and interest. One of the research results found was the one conducted by Kamal Yusuf, who wrote about the search for the word “plague” and Tho’ûn in the Arabic-Indonesian diachronic corpora [9] using the word “plague” and “tho’ûn” as the object of the study. It concluded the importance of the linguistic corpus in tracing the use of words. Another researcher is Eman Supriatna, who also researched the Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) outbreak from an Islamic perspective [10], explored further about Covid-19 that has attacked the world, and the idea offered by Islam about dealing with it. The other researcher, Muhyyiddin, shows his study results about Covid-19, the new normal, and Indonesia’s development planning [11]. The results highlight the economy and development of Indonesia. The following relevant study is about the response of the policy to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on the tourism sector, which was written by I Dewa Gde Sugihamretha [12]. It examines the policy response and the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on the tourism sector.

Based on the description of studies and research above, no researcher has examined the acculturation of the Thâ’ûn paradigm and pandemic based on nash (Quran and Hadith) and the historical studies in Islam. Nash and historical studies that become the barometer of this study will create new paradigm acculturation in perceiving Thâ’ûn or pandemic for three reasons, first: believing that nash is the way of life for the majority of Indonesian citizens, second: studying the objects of nash related to the problems of the nation, state and the international community, which generally is a scientific contribution and part of a religious solution, and third: it has never been studied, and it will bring up new paradigms amidst the pros and cons of multi-paradigms in society.

2. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

2.1. Thâ’ûn, Wabâ’ and Pandemic in Linguistics

The word Thâ’ûn is not found in the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI). However, it is an Arabic word that is very familiar because of its great frequency in Indonesian, which depicts a plague. Kamal Yusuf confirmed that the word Thâ’ûn was unknown or perhaps undiscovered in the pre-modern era of the Malay/Indonesian language, but the word Thâ’ûn in Arabic is frequently used [13]. In Arabic, Wabâ is synonymous with Thâ’ûn and, it means both plague and pandemic [14]. KBBI defines a pandemic as "an infectious disease that spreads quickly and attacks a large number of people in a large area" [15].

Regarding the differences, similarities, and explanations of tâ’ûn and wabâ', Ibn Najîm explains that wabâ is a general name for every type of disease [16]. Meanwhile, Ahmad Mukhtar declares that wabâ is any disease that quickly spreads from one place to another, and it can infect Humans, Animals, and Plants and sometimes causes death like Thâ’ûn [17]. Wabâ usually occurs after a war is over [18]. War, which has a permanent impact, such as the destruction of life, marks of blood, and human corpses that are not buried on time, also contributes to environmental pollution and causes plague and disease. In this regard, Ibn Manzhûr cites a hadith "fanâ’ ummatî bi al-Thâ’ûn wa al-Thâ’ûn" (the destruction of my ummah or people is due to Thâ’ûn and Thâ’ûn) that is the war that causes a flow of blood everywhere and disease outbreaks [19].

On the one hand, after observing the victims, it is found that wabâ is the same as Thâ’ûn, which means any disease that can generally infect anyone. Al-Fârâhîdî gave an example through the sentence that says "ashâba ahuw al-kârati ‘ânum wabâ syadid" [20]. Furthermore, the explanations above of the authoritative scientists conclude that Thâ’ûn is also called wabâ, but not every wabâ is Thâ’ûn [21].

There are many different explanations of Thâ’ûn as a plague in Islamic-based literature, but they still lead to a plague. Imam Syâfi’i, for example, declares that "Thâ’ûn is a common type of disease that spreads through the air and damages the immune system and the body itself" [22]. Whereas, Murtadha al-Zubaidî stated that Thâ’ûn is "wabâ that is said to be a damage that has an impact on the environment caused by air and land, including puddles and the scattered
carcasses” [23]. Ahmat Zayyât et al. define Thâʿūn as “an epidemic disease caused by a pest that harms mice, and the fleas transmit it to other mice and humans” [24]. Muhammad Fuad Abdul Baqi also comments about Thâʿūn. He thinks it is “wounds coming out of the humans’ bodies such as elbows, armpits, arms, fingers or the whole body, on which swelling and severe pain also show up” [25]. Another scholar, Zainuddîn al-Râzî, affirms that Thâʿūn is "a person who dies because of wabâ"[26] and it is supported by Ahmad al-Fayûmî [27].

The definitions given by these cross-skills Muslim scholars indicate that they have agreed on Thâʿūn to be described as an epidemic and severe disease that can spread quickly through the air, environment, and also animals. They also agree that a Thâʿūn damages the immune system, causes the body to be weak, and can result in death. Therefore, air, environment, and animals are the most accessible means to spread a pandemic.

2.2. Pandemic Among Ideology, Economics, and Social Media Battle

Everyone is familiar with the term ‘pandemic’ since many people say the word and even discuss it due to the phenomenal global plague. Novrina states that a pandemic involves a vast geographical area [28]. It spreads rapidly in most countries and continents, infecting many people. Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) is the best example of a pandemic, which now spreads across religions, cultures, countries, and continents.

Each country has a different policy and different results in dealing with the pandemic. The Indonesian government, for instance, has mapped promotable, preventive, and curative medical responses. The government sets a budget on social safety net [29], medical equipment, human resources, and vaccine acceleration in the economic sector. It also socializes its policy and restriction on people's mobility and gathering to prevent virus transmission. However, the policy leads to various controversies and responses. The shutdown of worship places and the prohibition of mudik (homecoming) during religious holidays are contrary to the operation of the tourism sector and shopping malls. It leads to controversy and various responses in society.

Mass media plays an essential role in creating a conducive and unfavorable atmosphere. Numbers and statistics worsen the situation. Moreover, they blow up death news and graves provided for covid-19 victims. In addition, mass media serves as the means for people to speak up their minds. It also produces news for education and confrontation.

2.3. The Flashback on Pandemic in Islamic History

Thâʿūn or the first plague in Islamic history, occurred in the era of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, in 6 AH, and it was known as Thâʿūn Syîrawîh. There was no record of the total of Muslim plague victims [30]. Related to Thâʿūn in the Islamic era, Ibn ‘Asâkir mentioned three cases, first: Thâʿūn Izdajarda, second: Thâʿūn Amwâs, and third: Thâʿūn al-Jârif. Another version stated there was five cases, namely Thâʿūn Syîrawîh, Thâʿūn ‘Amwâs, Thâʿūn al-Jârif, Thâʿūn al-Fatayât, and Thâʿūn al-Asyâraf.

Thâʿūn occurred in the era of Prophet Muhammad PBUH started with the lack of information on thâʿūn outbreak in Syâm, which was an annexation territory under Rûm Emperor. In Tabûk, the gate to conquer Syâm, the Prophet got the news of Thâʿūn occurred in Syâm, and it led him to return to Madina and cancel his mission [31]. Another version mentioned that Thâʿūn Syîrawîh happened in the era of Kisra Persia in which the Prophet PBUH had migrated to Madina.

Wabâ’ and Thâʿūn recorded in the Islamic history also occurred in the era of the caliphate era of Umar bin al-Khaththathâb, after conquering Bait al-Maqdis. The plague started in the village named ‘Amwâs [32]. Husein al-Diyâr al-Bakra opined that Thâʿūn ‘Amwâs is the first thâʿūn recorded in Islamic history [33]. Thâʿūn ‘Amwâs occurred between 17 [34] and 18 AH [35]. ‘Amwâs was a village in Syam located between Ramallah and Bait al-Maqdis [36]. Thâʿūn ‘Amwâs also spread to Palestine [37]. Therefore, ‘Amwas was noted as the location where Thâʿūn occurred and killed twenty-five thousand people. Another version stated the number of people killed was seventy thousand people in only three days [38]. It is a fantastic demographical number at that time. Abu ‘Ubaidah bin al-Jarrâh died in Jordan in 18 AH [39], as well as Muʿādz bin Jabal [40]. Companions such as Yazîd bin Abî Sufyân, al-Hârits bin Hisyâm, Suhail bin ‘Amru, ‘Utbah bin Suhail, Surahbil bin Hasanah [41], Abû Jandal Sahîl bin ‘Umar, and al-Fadhl bin al-‘Abbâs bin ‘Abdu al-Muthâlib [42], were also killed by Thâʿūn ‘Amwâs.

The third plague in Islamic history was Thâʿūn al-Jârif which is debatable [43]. An-Nawawî summarized debates among ulama (Islamic scholars) based on the facts provided by credible sources. Such as Ibn Qutaibah and al-Ashma‘î, who stated it occurred in 69 AH during the era of the caliph ‘Abdullâh bin al-
Zubair, and Qadhi 'Iyyâdh mentioned the year of 119 AH, and there is another version that is 87 AH. These opinions are significantly different [44]. The most important to note is that Thâ'ûn al-Jârîf was a historical fact and absolute. Reinhart Peter Andoze stated that Thâ'ûn al-Jârîf was a great pandemic in Asia, Africa, and Europe in 1348 [45]. The term Thâ'ûn al-Jârîf refers to many people killed, and it is like a tsunami destroying everything [46]. However, the literature has no further explanation on the origin, the spread, and the victims.

The fourth plague in Islamic history recorded in the literature was Thâ'ûn al-Fatayât occurred in the era of the caliph 'Abdu al-Malik bin Marwân, in 86 AH. The term Thâ'ûn al-Fatayât referred to the fact that this Thâ'ûn was initially experienced by women [47]. Imam Nawawî mentioned some places that suffered from this Thâ'ûn, such as Bashrah, Syâm, and Kufah [48]. However, there are no further explanations of the origin and the number of people killed. Literature also mentioned Thâ'ûn in Syâm, in 826 AH, that killed fifty thousand people in just a few days [49]. Hence, there was no further description of the origin, location, responses, and victims.

Historians recorded a devastating incident that killed more than two hundred thousand people. Even though it was not related to any of the diseases, the historians called it as Thâ'ûn al-Dîn since it killed companions both in the side of 'Âli bin Abî Thâlib and Mu‘âwiyyah bin Abî Sufyân in Shiffîn battlefield [50].

2.4. Objectification and Critics Based on Nash and History in Facing Pandemic

There are no disaster strikes in the world, including natural disasters and disasters caused by humans, except that it is a register of God. It is explained in His words “mâ ashiba min mushibatin fi al-arḍh wâ là fî anfusikumilla fî kitâb min qabli an-nabraahâ inna dzâlika ‘allallahî yasîr’”[51]. Al-Khâthîb furthermore described mushibah or disaster as things hated by people and caused by other people, leading to positive impacts like favors or negative ones draining humans’ minds [52]. Sayyid Thanthâwî explained mushibah existing in nature such as poverty and natural disaster, and the ones destructing humans such as diseases and plagues [53]. Both interpretations remind people that the worst things from nature in the form of plague that harms human beings are in the register of the God Almighty. Hence, it is essential to maintain faith to maintain the vertical relationship between human beings and God.

The death issue of some men due to Thâ‘ûn proved that it was real and everlasting. When the news came to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, he stated, “I hope that the rest (Thâ‘ûn) will not spread to us”[54]. Ibn ‘Asâkir quoted a hadith that said: “Jibrîl came to me with two kinds of diseases, fever, and Thâ‘ûn, then I direct the fever to Madîna and Thâ‘ûn to Syâm, Thâ‘ûn becomes witness and blessing for my followers and bad things for the disbelievers”[55]. A different tradition stated that Thâ‘ûn did not occur in Madîna and did not come with Dajjal [56]. On another occasion, ‘Âishah R.A asked about Thâ‘ûn, and the prophet said: “Thâ‘ûn is God’s punishment for all human beings, but it is a blessing for the followers who stay in the infected area and realize that all of the things that occurred is fate, then they become martyrs” [57]. In a hadith, the prophet states, “Ones killed in a battle to fight for the cause of Allah become martyrs and ones killed by Thâ‘ûn are also martyrs” [58]. Usamah bin Zaid once delivered the Prophet’s command, “If Thâ‘ûn or plague breaks out in a region, do not go out from that region” [59]. Another version says that “If Thâ‘ûn outbreaks in a region and you are there, then do not leave the region, and if you are not in that region, do not go there [60].

Preventive measures in the form of prevention and protection have been carried out to prevent the ummah from pandemic. Prophet Muhammad PBUH, as a prophet and as a leader, has given clear and measurable directions in dealing with Thâ‘ûn. The vertical relationship and full awareness of the destiny of Allah the Almighty are the essential things. It is followed by an explanation of the position of Thâ‘ûn towards every Muslim and non-Muslim, especially the justification for those who died because of Thâ‘ûn. As the basis of Muslims and as a metropolitan city, Medina receives "sky" protection through a vertical relationship with the Khâliq. The more exciting things are the appeal for not doing migration and mobility between the regions. Therefore, in facing a pandemic or Thâ‘ûn, we must integrate a vertical relationship with God in full awareness as destination and martyrdom for anyone who dies because of the pandemic. Besides, we must also integrate horizontal relationships with fellow human beings and the environment by optimizing preventive measures.

Meanwhile, the attitude of companions in personally dealing with Thâ‘ûn includes taking an active role in preserving the vertical relationship. It is proven by the statements of Abî ‘Ubaidah bin al-Jarrâh and Mu‘âdz bin Jabal before they both died during the Thâ‘ûn ‘Amwâs pandemic. They said, "Brothers! The disease is God's blessing, the preaching of the Prophet and the death of the pious people before
Observing these two contradicting narrations, the writer found that these two narrations appear in various literature. Still, the writer found more works of literature on Abu 'Ubaidah's attitude in realizing the blessing than the second opinion, running from destiny. About running from destiny, the writer only found it in one literature. Therefore, the attitude of realizing a pandemic as a blessing is more dominant than seeking destiny. Besides that, the preservation of the vertical relationship is still carried out with companions.

Apart from the individual attitudes of the companions contained in this historical record, the majority attitude is to follow the directions and appeals of the Prophet (PBUH), "do not enter the place of the outbreak of plague and do not leave that place." The most accurate example of this majority claim is Umar bin al-Khattab, accompanied by his companions, Muhajirin and Ansar, on the journey from Medina to Syâm (now it is Syria) until they arrived in Damascus city. The news about Thâ’ûn that occurred in that place was heard by the group. Caliph 'Umar discussed finding the best solution. Then, 'Abdurrahman bin 'Auf, the senior companion, conveyed the Prophet's abovementioned message [63]. As a result, the majority of companions and their entourage decided not to migrate to the area between the Thâ’ûn and non-Thâ’ûn zone. They obeyed and carried out the decision properly.

Leaving the place where the outbreak of Thâ’ûn occurred is also one of the attitudes revealed from the Thâ’ûn'Amwas pandemic [64]. This attitude was based on the desire to avoid the plague and move to a safe place. In addition to this individualistic policy, this attitude was also based on the order of 'Amru bin al- 'Ash. He was a governor of Syâm [65]. Mu'âdz bin Jabal refuted the statement of 'Amru bin al- 'Ash by quoting the message of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, "Thâ’ûn is a blessing to the ummah"[66]. Although the order of that government official was refuted, it is undeniable that many people followed his order and his direction. They carried out his ijithad individually by leaving the location of the outbreak. However, some societies avoid the outbreak by fleeing to the broad Sahara and valley with their family [67]. They also decided to protect themselves and their family by breaking the chain of communication and socialization among people, known as isolation.

The most exciting thing about these attitudes is that they are not afraid of Thâ’ûn; instead, they tend to be defiant. 'Abis al-Ghifârî is an example. He said, "yâ Thâ’ûn, khudzni" (Oh pandemic of Thâ’ûn, come to me) when he saw many people were rushing to leave the outbreak area. Because of his attitude, the other companions warned him not to do it again and conveyed the message of the Prophet PBUH, "do not expect death because it will break the chain of good deeds." Nevertheless, the man did not defy when blamed [68]. Specifically, the narrative of this challenging attitude is an awareness that Thâ’ûn exists and is real. Still, people choose to be individualists and opportunists, which will ultimately negatively impact the stability of society. This challenging attitude also does not have a good impact. The impacts it has are many deaths due to the plague factor. A long time ago, the Prophet had predicted it, which he narrated as "mautâni ya'khudzu minkum k̇iq̇'îsh al-ghanâm" (many deaths due to Thâ’ûn or the similar plague) [69].

Observing the causes of a mass and massive death is always conducted in the Islamic era, proven by the management carried out vertically and horizontally. The vertical relationship with Muhammad PBUH and Allah the Almighty makes Muslims protected from pandemics. They believe that a pandemic is a disaster. Therefore, they hand over their health problem to Allah the Almighty. The horizontal measures taken by the Prophet in his era and the majority of the companions in Umar bin Khaththab era were "not to leave and not to enter the area of the outbreak." These horizontal measures can be interpreted in various ways according to the context, such as Lockdown, Regional Quarantine, and Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). Although these three terms have different meanings and socialization in the state, government, region, and people, the terms still have the core as the command of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, "not to leave and not to enter the area of the outbreak."

Evacuating to remote places is also a part of avoiding pandemics in the past. Then, it becomes one of the measures. Nowadays, it is familiarized in the form of self-isolation or group isolation. Evacuation and isolation have one goal with a different concept, but it still leads to a preventive measure by avoiding socializing and crowds.

Ulama and Umarâ (the government) should remind each other and enforce provisions. They also should remind each other if there is a deviation, as what is given by Mu'âdz bin Jabal as ulama and 'Amru
bin al-Âsh as Umarâ as the examples. The consistency of the government officials of a country in providing information and explanation to the people is vital. The information conveyed must be accurate with the standard of truth and the maximum validity to prevent the people from having misinformation and miscommunication. It has been said by the Prophet and implemented by Umar bin Khattab. Thus, the result of the two leaders' decisions was broken down in a compatible manner.

The attitude of being not afraid of plague or pandemics and considering being immune to a pandemic is unwise and unpopular. It will bring disaster to many people as well as create new victims. This attitude is also not approved by the companions. They properly explain arguments. The most important of all the appeals, preventive measures, and suggestions accumulated from nash and history to face a pandemic is to pray immediately to Allah the Almighty. It is not enough if they only take preventive measures but do not pray to Allah the Almighty. Ibn Najim said that Thâ‘un was a very dangerous pandemic and suggested carrying out Qunût al-Nâzialah to be protected from the pandemic [70]. In this case, Imam al-Syaâ’î commented that Thâ‘un is a feared disease because it is the cause of the significant increasing death. A person exposed to the plague may typically be worried about his safety until he is completely cured of the plague [71].

2.5. The Pandemics Impact on Humanity, Social and Law

Being infected, exposed, infecting, or spreading plague intentionally or unintentionally has been familiar in the Muslim community for a long time ago. A person exposed to a plague may feel worried and afraid of himself or worried and afraid of transmitting it to others [72]. Thâ‘un also impacts humanity and social society, such as the fewer actions in greeting each other and shaking hands shown by the eastern custom. It happened because someone who once met in the morning was found dead in the afternoon; those who met in the afternoon were also found dead in the morning [73]. To describe the enormity of death in this pandemic, many people associate it with a hurricane. Thâ‘un that happened in Syam has caused mass death to one tribe, so no heirs from the lineage of the tribe can be found. It is an example of the Thâ‘un impact from the law side [74]. Umar bin al-Khattab then made a policy by making other tribes the heir [75]. Al-Baihaqi, in the history of Zaid bin Thabit, explains the process and inheritance system of a Thâ‘un case. He said that the people still alive inherit the things left by the deceased, and the deceased ones do not inherit from each other [76]. Deaths caused by the second wave of Covid-19, the Delta variant, have also significantly negatively impacted society. It can be proven by thousands of new orphans that create new social problems [77].

3. CONCLUSION

The new paradigm in dealing with a pandemic is the mainstreaming of personal, environmental, and food hygiene. The suggestion to maintain cleanliness in Islam is not a new thing. It has become order and habit, but some Muslim societies still do not implement it well.

Overcoming every pandemic must be carried out using two methods, vertical and horizontal. The vertical method is used to get closer to Allah the Almighty, to be fully aware of His power, and to do the optimum tawakal by carrying out activities accompanied by strict health protocols. Meanwhile, the horizontal method is carried out through lockdown, regional quarantine, and social restrictions. Implementing these three modern terms has been practiced since the era of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. His message, which says, "do not enter the area of the plague outbreak and do not leave that area," is very famous. This message was still implemented as a solution by the Islamic government (Caliph Umar) in the early days when Islam spread throughout Arab. It proves the necessity of a balanced vertical and horizontal relationship is facing a global problem.

The history also records the different attitudes of the people who live in the Islamic government, such as fleeing and not worrying about themselves. It can be analogized as a form of self-isolation and distrust in a medical outcome. However, history does not mention the medicine or types of drugs used as a method of curing Thâ‘un. The undocumented type of drug that people used at that time strengthens the idea that the people who suffered from Thâ‘un only consume herbal medicine. There is also an assumption that tawakal and patience are also firm beliefs.

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