

The Occurrence of Plagues in Muslim Lands Through History



THE YEAR 449H / 1057CE

Ibn Hajar (رحمة الله) wrote:

“... There occurred among them such destruction [of life] whose like had not taken place or had been heard of. To the extent that on a single day in one region 80,000 people departed from it. Those who died therein were counted as 1,500,000 people.

Then it occurred in Azerbaijan, then Ahwāz, then Wāsiṭ, then Baṣrah, until they would dig a large pit and throw 20 to 30 [of the dead] all together.

And it occurred in Samarqand and Balkh. On a single day 6,000 or more would die. People were occupied night and day with washing, shrouding and burying. Among them would be a man whose heart would burst due to its [corrupted] blood and a drop would appear from his mouth whereupon he would die. And perhaps a maggot would come out of his mouth, he would not

know what it was and would die. More than 2,000 homes were sealed off, no one remained in them. The people repented, they gave charity, and stuck to the mosques and to recitation [of the Qurʾān]. They spilled intoxicants and broke musical instruments.

It would coincide that a home would have intoxicants and all of its inhabitants would die in a single night. And that a man would have intercourse with a woman unlawfully, and they would both die. And a group would enter a home finding a man in the throes of death. He would point to the storage where a container of wine was kept. They would spill it and within the hour he would be cured. A teacher of children had 900 children [under his care] and not a single one of them remained [alive].



Those who remained in Samarqand in particular during the month of Shawwāl to the end of Dhūl-Qaʿdah, then 260,000 of them died. The start of this plague was in Turkistan, then to

Kāshghar, then to Farghānah, then it entered Samarqand. It did not enter Balkh and Mā Warā al-Nahr (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan). A group set out from Bukhārā to Balkh and descended upon Rabāṭ, and all of them died except the people of Balkh.

Death was mainly among women, children, youth and freed slaves more so than it was among the middle-aged. Then it was among the middle-aged more so than the elderly. And it was among the common-folk more so than the soldiers. In essence none among the military, and elderly men and women died but a small number.”¹ End of quote.

NOTE: The plagues that took place in history and took millions of lives are not the same type of disease as the **common cold** over which the media is causing tremendous hysteria due to excessive fearmongering. If you live in areas of very high air pollution such as **Wuhan in China** or **Tehran in Iran** or **Lombardy and Milan in northern Italy** or any place where hazardous levels of **nitrogen dioxide** and **sulphur dioxide** and **particulate matter** (PM10, PM2.5) from heavy industry and exhaust fumes causes harm to respiratory organs, then this can make the common cold a lot worse, and lead to pneumonia.² Likewise, if you have underlying

¹ Badhl al-Māʿūn Fi Faḍl al-Tāʿūn (Dār Kutub al-Athariyyah, 1413H), pp. 228-229.

² The areas where the largest outbreaks of death through respiratory disease have taken place in the past month are known historically to have hazardous levels of nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, and particulate matter pollution. **However, this factor is not mentioned in the media at all.** It can be readily verified with a small amount of research. Causes of disease are multifactorial, and diseases are actually states and conditions of the body, **not noun-entities** that physically exist like trees and cats. As such, the notion that a microbe, in and of itself, is the sole causative agent of a disease condition is false as is clear

health problems of the lungs and heart, or are of old age, then it can make the common cold a lot worse because of an already burdened immune system. The overwhelming majority of people however, will clear the common cold without complications which is why the healthy and young are least affected.

Nevertheless, the plagues of history are a tremendous lesson for the believer. Trials and tribulations of disease and death arise because of sins and disobedience as is clear in the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. One should reflect upon history and its lessons and be led to making repentance and seeking forgiveness from Allāh and being preoccupied in rectifying one's affairs.

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to any person of sound mind, and this erroneous way of thinking predisposes a person to believe in the 'adwā (contagion) that was negated by the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Rather, there are other causes which must also be present for a disease state to set in, and this means **individual susceptibility** is key, it is multi-factorial, having both internal and external factors. Since Allāh is the creator of all causes and effects, then all disease takes place through His decree, His will and creative power. Thus disease is brought to each individual, or to groups of individuals in a given region, or to those with shared qualities irrespective of region, on account of combined factors that Allāh determines. Hence, no disease occurs or spreads except that it is by way of Allāh's decree, His will and creative power. As for the language of the disbelievers, when they speak of diseases as noun-entities, and give what may or may not bring about disease symptoms (such as a particular bacteria or virus) such powers and abilities which do not accord with the factual realities, and which lead to the notion that disease spreads intrinsically, through its inherent nature, leading to fear and apprehension, then all of this enters into the 'adwā that is negated and which the polytheists used to believe in. Rather, disease states are brought about by multiple factors, including sin and disobedience, with all things under Allāh's control. Alongside all of this, taking appropriate precaution from harm is legislated, and the affairs are resigned to Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic.