

Conception of the Contagion: A Clarification of Hadith: *lā ‘adwā* and *firra min al-majdhūm* and other relevant aḥādīth

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Abstract

Communicable diseases continue to exact a substantial toll on health care resources. Continued outbreaks of these diseases persist indicating a cursory response of people to the prevention measures. This response is influenced by their perceived conception of the contagion taught by the religious scholars. Regarding the concept of contagion, there are two kinds of traditions: One categorically negates the contagion. The other approves of it like the tradition about avoiding contact with a leper and the instruction to avoid entering a land where plague has broken out. Both kinds of traditions demand a revision of their text concerning the contagion in such a way that they may be aligned with the current medical comprehension of the aetiology of communicable diseases. Only then, the affected community will respond to preventive measures against infections and the incidence of outbreaks can be reduced.

Keywords: Contagion, *‘adwā*, *majdhūm*, leprosy, plague

Introduction

Communicable diseases still pose an alarming risk to the public health and the long-fought battle against pestilence has not yet been won. Re-emergence of old infections and occurrence of new ones underline the necessity to adopt measures for their prevention and control. As a matter of fact, the lack of timely recognition of the magnitude of the problem and an insular complacency of the concerned authorities to the threat of communicability led to less priority for awareness of contagious diseases,

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their prevention measures and control methods.

The societal response to a contagion depends on their perceived conception of contagiousness. A general lack of understanding of the causes of a disease exerts a negative influence on the response of the community to the preventive measures of that disease. So, the way people conceptualize the aetiology of a disease is central to the effectiveness of control mechanisms. In general, the contagion is perceived by religious scholars to be extinct, and affliction of a contagious disease is seen as a punishment from God to evil people. This line of thinking stemmed from misleading generalizations that were promoted by those scholars who would base their argument on the literal adherence to the text of *ḥadīth*. This led to their non-compliance to the preventive measures of infectious diseases, and as a result such infections spread. For the correction of this view and clarification of the conception of contagion, a re-evaluation of the relevant text is needed to unfold the nature of contagiousness. A textual revision of the Prophetic traditions concerning contagiousness is pivotal in bringing social response to preventive measures in accordance with the medical sensibility in vogue.

Misconception about the Contagion

There has been a progressive change in the scholastic thought from a denial of contagion to its approval. A majority of scholars tend to deny the concept of contagiousness because a number of traditions declare that there is no contagion. One of them is given below:

إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا عَدْوَى وَلَا صَفَرٌ وَلَا هَامَةٌ فَقَالَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، فَمَا بَأْسُ إِبِلِي، تَكُونُ فِي الرَّمْلِ كَأَنَّهَا الطِّبَاءُ، فَيَأْتِي البَعِيرُ الأَجْرَبُ فَيَدْخُلُ بَيْنَهَا فَيُجْرِبُهَا؟ فَقَالَ: فَمَنْ أَعْدَى الأَوَّلُ؟

Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "There is no contagion, nor is there bad omen in the month of *ṣafar*, nor is there any bad omen due to owl. A Bedouin asked, O Allāh's Messenger! What about my camels? They are like deer on the sand, but when a mangy camel comes and mixes with them, they all get infected with the mange? The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Then who conveyed the (mange) disease to the first one?"¹

The advocates of the absence of contagion give preference to the traditions attesting the words *lā ‘adwā* because they are strong in authenticity and have been narrated by a number of Companions of the Prophet (Allah be pleased with them). In addition to it, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has also said:

لَا يُعْغِي شَيْءٌ شَيْئًا .

“A thing does not infect other thing.”²

Further, his treatment of lepers also confirms the absence of contagion. He has eaten with a leper; he touched his hand and put it in his bowl of meal.³ Had there been any fear of contagiousness, he would not have eaten with him. Although he has commanded to stay away from lepers, but most of those traditions are not authentic. Ibn Mājah’s narration “Do not stare lepers constantly” is weak because of Ibn Abī Zinād about whom the scholars say that he is turbulent in narration and is not among those whose narration can be used as an argument.⁴ Another tradition on lepers, “Talk to lepers from a distance of two spears between you and him” narrated by Abū Nu‘aym is also unauthentic. This is because of Ḥasan b. ‘Umārah who is very unreliable and his narration should be abandoned in view of scholars.⁵ However, some traditions on avoiding contact with lepers are authentic as the following tradition:

فِرٌّ مِنَ الْمَجْذُومِ كَمَا تَفِرُّ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ .

“Run away from a leper as you run away from a lion.”⁶

The actions of the Companions of the Prophet (Allah be pleased with them) testify that this command has been abrogated. *Imām* al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) says that some notable Companions like ‘Umar, Ibn ‘Umar and Salmān used to eat with lepers because they believed in the abrogation of the command to flee from a leper.⁷ Once ‘Ikramah avoided a leper, Ibn ‘Abbās said to him: “He may be better than you and me.” Abū Bakr has also been reported to have joined a leper in his meal and ate with him.⁸

The tradition of al-Sharīd narrated by Muslim is also authentic in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not allow a leper to come and take the oath of allegiance.⁹ But this tradition does not state the reason of sending him back. The possibility remains that he was not sent back because of fear of contagiousness, but for some other reason. It is possible that he wanted to prevent leper’s disgrace in front of others. *Imām* al-Zurqānī

(d.1122/1710) says: “We believe that leprosy does not transmit, but we might find in our hearts disaffection and disliking for the leper.”¹⁰

The command of fleeing from a leper might be due to care for the heart of the leper as it is reported that when *Imām* Mālik (d. 179/795) was asked about the *ḥadīth* “Do not stare lepers constantly”, he replied: “I do not know that this command means anything except the fear that something might come into the heart of a Muslim.”¹¹ Abū Walīd al-Bājī (d. 474/1081) also denies the belief of those who say that contagion is caused by the association of the sick with the healthy. He says that a person is allowed to run away from a leper if he dislikes his closeness or he is disturbed by the smell of a leper.¹² So, in his view also the escape from lepers is not due to fear of contagiousness, but due to some other reason.

In fact, the pagan Arab society was superstitious. One of their superstitions was about the contagion. They used to believe that leprosy spreads because it ‘flies’ from a leper to a healthy person. Ibn Jawzī (d. 597/1201) expounds that the tradition “there is no contagion” refused such superstition. The Prophet (peace be upon him) intended to link the transmission of leprosy to the destiny. For this reason, he asked to the inquirer, “who caused the (mange) disease in the first one?” So, man should not rely on the causes, but on The Causer.¹³

One more tradition narrated by Abū Hurayrah is against the concept of contagion. It says:

لَا يُورَدُ مَرَضٌ عَلَى مُصِحِّحٍ .

“The sick camel should not be taken to the healthy one.”¹⁴

Abū ‘Ubayd (d. 224/838) opines that this tradition does not support the concept of contagion. This has been commanded for blocking the source of evil because if a healthy camel becomes sick by Allāh’s decree, the owner of the camel might think that this is because of contagion. In this way, he falls into temptation by approving of what has been disapproved by the Prophet, therefore, he ordered to abstain from doing this.¹⁵ Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311/924) also holds the same opinion.¹⁶

Al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998) refers the occurrence of diseases to the Divine Decree. He also does not agree with the concept of contagion.¹⁷ Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) also speaks up that the prohibition of bringing a sick close to the healthy is because of the fear that the affected person might speculate

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that he caught the disease due to transmission from the sick, not because it was decreed divinely.¹⁸ Al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933) supposes that if the owner of camels had not brought his healthy camels close to sick camels, they still would have got this disease because Allāh have predestined it.¹⁹ Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1273) also believes that getting a disease is a Writ of the Divine; it is not due to contagion.²⁰

A commentator of traditions, Ibn Baṭṭāl (d. 449/1057) combines two traditions about contagiousness. The tradition about negation of contagion is an information from him that contagion has no reality. On the other hand, he prohibited the owner of sick camels to come in contact with healthy camels, so that he should not speculate that his healthy camels got the disease from sick camels. In this way, he would agree with the belief of contagion which has been negated by the Prophet (peace be upon him).²¹ Al-Munāwī (d. 1031/1622) has also commented that there is no transmission of a disease from the sick to the healthy. The view of doctors about the transmission of diseases is wrong. In reality, diseases occur due to the Will of Allāh. And the prohibition is a preventive measure like one avoids a sloping wall and a defective ship.²²

In short, earlier scholars accepted the generalization of the tradition “there is no contagion” because it was strongly authentic and largely narrated *ḥadīth*. The tradition “A thing does not infect other thing” was seen as an exposition of the same fact. The tradition “who caused the (mange) disease in the first one?” was considered to question minds about it. The Prophet and his Companions used to eat with lepers attesting the absence of contagion. The tradition in favour of the contagious nature of leprosy were assigned other connotations by earlier scholars. The medical cause of infections was largely ignored because the aetiology of infectious diseases was not clear before the advent of the microscope. However, few scholars were contemplating on the nature of infectious diseases because it was plainly observed by them that some diseases did transmit by mixing up with the sick. Although they were not able to explain it biologically, but they definitely tried to assess the text of *ḥadīth* in other ways.

Conception of the Contagion

Although the tradition “there is no contagion” is authentic, but its interpretation has been problematic. Thinking that it is generalized and all diseases are non-contagious obviously excludes some diseases which are

transmissible. Hence, a better interpretation is suggested by Qādī Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013) that this is a generalized command which has few exceptions (*‘āmm makḥṣūṣ al-ba‘ḍ*).²³ The exception to the generalization is given by the tradition “run away from a leper.” Therefore, the absence of contagion is concerned only with those diseases that are non-communicable whereas the communicable nature of diseases is expressed in the ruling about lepers and other traditions of the like. Shams al-Dīn al-Karmānī (d. 786/1384) also gives the same explanation that this is a generalized command with few exceptions.²⁴ An authentic tradition of Abū Hurayrah via ‘Affān can be cited to prove the explanation of al-Bāqillānī. In this tradition, the generalization (there is no contagion) is given with the exception (run away from a leper). The tradition goes as follows:

قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا عَدْوَى وَلَا طَيْرَةٌ، وَلَا هَامَةٌ وَلَا صَفَرٌ، وَفَرٌّ مِنَ الْمَجْدُومِ كَمَا تَفْرُ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ .

“Abū Hurayrah narrated that Allāh’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: There is no contagion, nor is there any bad omen (for birds), nor is there any bad omen in the owl, nor is there any bad omen in the month of *ṣafār*, and one should run away from the leper as one runs away from a lion.”²⁵

Even the denial of contagion does not mean its absolute non-existence. It only refutes the belief of ignorant people who used to say that the diseases are communicable by virtue of their own nature, not by the Will of God. The Prophet (peace be upon him) refuted their belief by action and words together. He used to eat with the lepers to demonstrate that it was Allāh who ailed and healed and he forbade association with lepers to teach that this association could be a cause of transmission which Allāh had created to cause leprosy. Agreeing to this view, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) says that the contagion does not occur by virtue of its own nature.²⁶ Al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066) also conforms to this view and adds that Allāh has made the association of the healthy with the sick a cause of the origin of contagion. Therefore, each of the traditions “run away from a leper” and “the sick camel should not be taken to the healthy one” agrees with the destiny of Allāh.²⁷

Sharf al-Dīn al- Ṭībī (d. 743/1342) holds the same view. He comments that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not mean the denial of contagion. He only meant a denial of the wrong belief, whereas the tradition “run away from a leper” indicates his real intention. He meant that the association with a leper is one of the causes of leprosy. Hence, avoiding a leper is a means of prevention. Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d. 1014/1606) also approves of this explanation.²⁸ Badr al-Dīn al-‘Aynī (d. 855/1451) also opines that the denial of contagion means the denial of transmission of diseases in the absence of an agent otherwise the communicability by an agent is not denied.²⁹

A nice explanation is given by Shihāb al-Dīn al-Turbushtī (d. 661/1263) who proceeds to comment that the belief in the absence of contagion makes us to suspend the principles of medicine, while *Sharī‘ah* has not asked to suspend them, rather it has come with their approval. The argument in favour of contagion is that the prohibition meant for *ḥarām* might be sometimes combined with the prohibition meant for *makrūh*. The tradition which tells that the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent a leper back signifies prevention from the cause of harm. On the other hand, he also ate with a leper saying: “Eat with the name of Allāh, attesting (the protection) of Allāh (against the contagion) and trusting in Him”. It signifies his huge *tawakkul* on Allāh, but for others it is not recommended to do the same provided their level of reliance on Allāh. So, if they would not eat with a leper, it would be only considered *makrūh*. Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī also quotes his view and admires it.³⁰

One of the best explanations and the one which can be considered a primordial form of the concept of quarantine is given by none other than Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889). He says that the command to run away from a leper is because of a common undeniable observation, that is the transmission of a disease from a body to another by touch, or close association with him, or breathing of bad air that surrounds him. On the other hand, the tradition “*lā ‘adwā*” means that when a plague epidemic occurs in a land and people leave that land to save themselves, then such escape is not allowed as “there is no contagion.” Their act is only an attempt to escape the destiny of Allāh which is not possible. This view is a very significant interpretation of both kinds of traditions. His explanation is more in line with the medical conception. He says: “the doctors advise to prevent association with a leper, not because of *‘adwā*, but because of the effect of his odour as it sickens the person who breathes it for a long time.

For this reason, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that the sick camel should not be taken to the healthy one because sometimes one of the camels has wet scab and when he mixes with other camels or rubs with them or harbours their sitting place the water that comes out from his lesions reaches them and infects them.”³¹

Ibn Qayyim (d. 751/1350) approves of the viewpoint of Ibn Qutaybah. He also explores the two kinds of traditions. In his view, the Prophet (peace be upon him) denied the belief of the polytheists by his tradition “there is no contagion”. And he prohibited exposure to the sick by his saying “the sick camel should not be taken to the healthy one” because the exposure can become the cause of transmitting the disease which Allāh created because He, Who has created the effects, has also created their causes. This is merely the belief in the Oneness of Allāh in contrast to polytheism.³² Being a strong advocate of the contagious nature of diseases, he comments about leprosy that this disease is contagious in the view of medical practitioners, and one who is close to a leper, he can be affected with this disease due to the effect of leper’s breath which is a cause among the salient causes of diseases. For this reason, he (peace be upon him) forbade every person of his *ummah* to keep away from lepers.³³

Last but not the least, there is also a possibility that the part indicating absence of contagion had been abrogated in favour of another tradition which indicates the presence of contagion. This can be proven by citing another tradition of Abū Hurayrah narrated by Abū Salamah which says that he had stopped narrating *lā ‘adwā* deliberately indicating that in his view it was abrogated. The tradition says:

أَنَّ أَبَا سَلَمَةَ بْنَ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ، حَدَّثَهُ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا عَدْوَى وَيُحَدِّثُ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا يُورِدُ مُمْرِضٌ عَلَى مُصِحِّ قَالَ أَبُو سَلَمَةَ: كَانَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ يُحَدِّثُهُمَا كِلَيْتَيْهِمَا عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، ثُمَّ صَمَتَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ عَنْ قَوْلِهِ لَا عَدْوَى وَأَقَامَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُورِدُ مُمْرِضٌ عَلَى مُصِحِّ .

“Abū Salamah b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf reported that Allāh’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: “There is no transitive disease”, and he also said: “A sick camel should not be taken to the healthy one.” Abū Salamah said that Abū Hurayrah used to narrate these two traditions from Allāh’s Messenger, but afterwards he

became silent after his saying: “There is no ‘adwā”, and he stuck to this: “A sick camel should not be taken to the healthy one.”³⁴

A strong argument in favour of the concept of contagion comes from his clear instruction regarding plague. This instruction should be taken as a preventive measure against plague which is a contagious disease. Al-Bukhārī mentions this tradition as follows:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الطَّاعُونَ رِجْسٌ أُرْسِلَ عَلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ، أَوْ عَلَى مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ، فَإِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ بِأَرْضٍ، فَلَا تَقْدُمُوا عَلَيْهِ، وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ، وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا، فِرَارًا مِنْهُ.

“Allāh’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: Plague is a calamity which was sent to a group of *Banū Isrā’īl*, or upon those who were before you. So when you hear that it has broken out in a land, don’t go to it, and when it has broken out in the land where you are, don’t go out running out of it.”³⁵

This tradition teaches what is now called “quarantine for epidemics”. The principle suggested by him for the prevention of diseases still holds significance in the current medical knowledge. According to medical experts, the control of plague requires the knowledge of the epidemiology of the infection, the vectors of transmission and the potential sources of human contact.³⁶

In plague, the human contacts are potential sources of the transmission of infection. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade one to leave an area where plague has struck in his presence, because if he will move to other areas, thinking to escape the decree of Allāh, he will carry the germs of the disease to that land and will become a potential carrier and a suitable vehicle to transmit the infective organisms to the susceptible hosts. While explaining the tradition on plague, Ibn Qayyīm elucidates that leaving an area during an epidemic and travelling to a far off land involves much movement of the body which can be harmful and there is also fear of transmission of the disease in that area. Therefore, to avoid leaving that place is better and travelling to an inflicted area is harmful.³⁷

On the other side, the Prophet (peace be upon him) also instructed all contacts to stay in their places and face the calamity patiently, and in return

of their patience they are rewarded with the honour of the death of martyrs. He pronounced:

فَلَيْسَ مِنْ عَبْدٍ يَتَّقُ الطَّاعُونَ، فَيَمْكُثُ فِي بَلَدِهِ صَابِرًا، يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُصِيبَهُ إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ
اللَّهُ لَهُ، إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ الشَّهِيدِ .

“If one stays in his country patiently at the time of an epidemic plague, hoping for Allāh’s reward and believing that nothing will befall him except what Allāh has written for him, he will get the reward of a martyr.”³⁸

An argument put forward by those who negate the contagion is the tradition regarding eating with a leper. Although this tradition of Jābir has been narrated by al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dā’ūd and Ibn Mājah, but all of them contain Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah about whom al-Nasā’ī says that he is not strong in tradition. Abū Dā’ūd says that there is weakness in his tradition.³⁹ Ibn Mu‘īn says that he is nothing. Abū Ḥātim says that his tradition should be written only.⁴⁰ Ibn ‘Adī mentions him in his treatise *Al-Kāmilfi’l-ḍu‘afā’* and comments: “I have not seen his tradition more deniable than this one.”⁴¹ So, this tradition is not authentic. On the other hand, the tradition “run away from a leper” is authentic and has been narrated by more scholars and its chains are greater in number, so this should be preferred. Its narrators are *al-thiqah* (authentic) and it supports the concept of contagion.

Moreover, al-Tirmidhī comments that Shu‘bah also narrates the tradition of eating with a leper and his tradition is more authentic than Jābir’s because it skips Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah. The Shu‘bah’s tradition shows that actually it was Ibn ‘Umar who held the hand of the leper and ate with him.⁴² This proves that the authentic tradition is *mawqūf* on Ibn ‘Umar, while the *marfū‘* tradition is the weaker one. However, there is a possibility that two separate incidences had occurred. Once the Prophet ate with a leper and Ibn ‘Umar had done the same on another occasion. In such case, the tradition “the sick camel should not be taken to the healthy one” should be preferred.

The tradition of sending a leper back is a strong argument in favour. The leper in the delegation of al-Thaqīf was sent back by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) to avoid the spread of disease to others. He said to

him, “We have accepted your allegiance, so you may go.”⁴³ The possibility that he was sent back for some other reason seems implausible, because if this was the case, he could have been allowed to come later when no one was around. Here, his mixing with others was avoided by accepting his allegiance from a distance.

Now the question arises why was the Prophet (peace be upon him) avoiding mixing with lepers? The answer is now known to us by virtue of our medical knowledge. Leprosy can transmit to others by airborne droplets released by coughing or sneezing. The contacts might inhale the organism by this route and catch the disease. The lepers discharge abundant organisms from their nasal mucosa into the environment that are inhaled by the closer contacts. *Mycobacterium leprae*, the causative organism, then multiplies on the inferior turbinate of the host. After a brief bacteremic phase, the bacterium binds to and enters Schwann cells and macrophages of the host. Hence, the traditions “run away from a leper,” “talk with a leper at a distance of a spear,” “we have accepted your allegiance, so you may go,” and “the sick camel should not be taken to the healthy one” conform to the present medical understanding of the aetiology of leprosy. Likewise, prevention of other communicable diseases is also recommended, and this recommendation goes with the commands of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).

Conclusion

Despite the most incredible advances of the medical history in the last century, the menace of communicable diseases still lurks ahead. One of the reasons of this retreat against infectious diseases is a profound lack of understanding of the contagious nature of diseases. In communities given to religious opinions, misinterpretation of the text might allow them to think that the contagion does not exist, leading to their non-compliance to the preventive measures of communicable diseases.

Among the Muslims, same conception is prevalent based on the text of the tradition “*lā 'adwā*” (there is no contagion). This tradition proclaims the absence of contagion and it is advocated by a number of scholars because of its authenticity and multiplicity of the narrators. It is also supported by other narrations of the same kind, for example, “a thing does not infect the other thing,” and by the Prophet’s and his Companions’ action of eating with lepers. This leads to a cursory response of the religious people to the

control and prevention mechanism of a disease. The infections, thus, spread through this route.

Today, the scholars assert, contrary to the notion of the absence of contagion, that the tradition “*lā ‘adwā*” does not negate the contagion exclusively. It refutes the belief of the polytheists who used to attribute the diseases to other than Allah. It only explains that the transmission of diseases does not happen by virtue of their own nature, or against the Will of Allāh. There is always a cause for the spread of diseases. They spread with the Will of Allāh and their course of transmission follows the Divine Decree. On the one hand, the pathogens and their infections follow the Divine Will, and on the other hand, Allāh has given immunity and resistance to the body.

The “*lā ‘adwā*” part of the tradition is a generalization from which few exceptions (of communicable diseases) can be made. The presence of contagion is supported by a number of other traditions, for example, “run away from a leper,” “do not bring a diseased camel to a healthy one,” “when you hear that it (plague) has broken out in a land, don’t go to it, and when it has broken out in the land where you are, don’t go out running out of it.” The Prophet’s action also approves of the contagious nature of leprosy as he sent a leper back and took his allegiance from a distance.

The tradition about his eating with a leper has a weak chain because it contains Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah who is an unreliable narrator. The same tradition has also been narrated via Shu‘bah that skips this weak narrator, but its chain ends on Ibn ‘Umar showing that it was his action to join a leper in his meal. Hence, this is pertinent to say that the conception of the contagion is present in the traditions of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) which has been used as a quarantine of epidemics and is in line with the current medical knowledge.

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