

Spiritual Journeys of Hajj Pilgrims Amid Pandemic in Safarnamah-'i Mirza Husayn Farahani: Qasqazih, 'Uthmani, Makkah, 1302-1303 Hijiri Qamari

Kembara Kerohanian Jemaah Haji Semasa Pandemik Dalam Safarnamah-'i Mirza Husayn Farahani: Qasqazih, 'Uthmani, Makkah, 1302-1303 Hijiri Qamari

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ABSTRACT

Mirza Mohammad Hosayn al-Farahani was a Persian literary figure renowned for his contributions to literature and Persian folklore. His distinguished travelogue, Safarnamah-i, holds significant value in offering insights into the sociological, political, and economic conditions of the Middle East, including the pandemic situation in Mecca during the early nineteenth century. This study therefore aims to examine al-Farahani's perspective on Hajj pilgrims during their quarantine in Mecca. The experiences encountered by these pilgrims not only affected their physical well-being but also shaped their spiritual journeys amid the pandemic. This research adopts a qualitative approach by analysing the content of Safarnamah-i through Imam al-Ghazali's Spiritual Theory (IGST). The study further emphasises spiritual values such as patience, resilience, obedience, and acceptance as guiding principles for Hajj pilgrims facing pandemic-related challenges. By applying IGST, the research highlights the significance of literary works in shaping societal identity and in offering strategies to address life's challenges, particularly during times of crisis. In addition, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how spiritual elements support the development of mental and spiritual resilience within society, thereby positioning literature as a medium for self-reflection. It is hoped that future research will further explore the interaction between literature and spirituality in other Middle Eastern societies, particularly in relation to community experiences during crises such as pandemics.

Keywords: al-Farahani; Hajj pilgrims; pandemic; spiritual journeys; Safarnamah-'i

ABSTRAK

Mirza Mohammad Hosayn al-Farahani merupakan sasterawan Parsi yang berkemahiran dalam bidang kesusasteraan dan cerita rakyat Parsi. Karya kembara unggulnya iaitu Safarnamah-i sangat bernilai dalam memberi pengetahuan terhadap sosiologi masyarakat, politik dan ekonomi di Timur Tengah termasuk situasi pandemik di Mekah pada awal abad ke-19. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk membahaskan perspektif al-Farahani terhadap para jemaah haji ketika berkuarantin di Mekah. Pengalaman yang dilalui oleh para jemaah haji ini bukan sahaja mempengaruhi aspek fizikal mereka, bahkan juga memberi kesan terhadap perjalanan kerohanian semasa menghadapi situasi pandemik. Reka bentuk kajian ini adalah kaedah kualitatif dengan menganalisis kandungan teks kajian iaitu Safarnamah-i menggunakan Teori Spiritual Imam al-Ghazali (TSIG). Selain itu, kajian ini turut menekankan nilai-nilai kerohanian seperti prinsip sabar, tabah, taat dan reda sebagai panduan bagi para jemaah haji dalam menghadapi situasi pandemik. Dengan mengaplikasikan Teori Spiritual Imam al-Ghazali (TSIG), kajian ini memperlihatkan kepentingan karya sastera dalam membentuk jati diri masyarakat serta pendekatan yang boleh digunakan dalam mengatasi cabaran hidup khususnya semasa pandemik. Bukan setakat itu sahaja, kajian ini memberi sumbangan dalam memahami bagaimana elemen kerohanian membantu membina kekuatan mental dan rohani masyarakat sekaligus menjadikan sastera sebagai medium untuk refleksi diri. Diharapkan agar kajian lanjutan dapat dipergiatkan dalam meneroka interaksi antara sastera dan kerohanian dalam masyarakat lain di Timur Tengah terutama dalam konteks pengalaman masyarakat ketika menghadapi situasi krisis seperti pandemik.

Kata kunci: al-Farahani; Jemaah Haji; pandemik; perjalanan kerohanian pandemik; Safarnamah-i

INTRODUCTION

The term *safarnama*, derived from Persian (سفرنامه) refers to a work of travel literature. In essence, a *safarnama* is a travel record written by a traveler, documenting observations of human life, the natural world, and accompanied by precise details of time, date, and place (Zohkarnain, N. A. & Lubis, F. A. 2023; Kingsley 2013).

In the world of Persian travel literature, Mirza Mohammad Hosayn al-Farahani stands as a significant figure who delves deeply into themes of faith, resilience, and societal experiences, particularly during the pilgrimage. His well-known work, *Safarnamah-i*, serves not only as a travel journal but as a profound reflection on the spiritual journeys of hajj pilgrims, especially in the context of facing pandemic challenges.

Safarnamah-i by al-Farahani bears the signature of King Nasir al-Din Shah along with his seal. The original manuscript was held by his son, Khan Malek Sasani. Notably, *Safarnamah-i* is crafted in calligraphy, a distinctive art form of the time, as al-Farahani's mastery in calligraphy was highly admired. Although challenging to read, this text exemplifies the exquisite calligraphic style of the Qajar era, created with artistic sophistication (Bamdad 2020).

Mirza Mohammad Hosayn al-Farahani was a Persian diplomat and the author of *Safarnamah-i*. Born in 1264/1847 in Farhn, he passed away in 1331/1913. Besides his literary achievements, al-Farahani served as a vizier, advising nobles, including royal dignitaries, during their travels in India. For instance, during Nasir al-Din Shah's visit to Khorasan, he acted as the Minister of Information,

guiding the royal entourage around the region. In 1885, al-Farahani embarked on his hajj pilgrimage from Tehran, passing through the Caucasus, the Ottoman Empire, and Egypt. Given the diversity of countries he traversed, his travel account was later formalized into a book upon Nasir al-Din Shah's orders, meticulously detailing each experience he encountered (Farhn 1990). By 1887, his travelogue was completed and presented to Nasir al-Din Shah (Farmayan, H. 2022).

In travel literature, works like Mirza Mohammad Hosayn al-Farahani's *Safarnamah-i* offer deep reflections on spiritual resilience and the societal challenges faced during pandemics. Lubis, F. A., and Zohkarnain, N. A. (2021) similarly discuss how travelogues capture the tension between freedom and captivity, reflecting on physical, spiritual, and ideological struggles. This aligns with al-Farahani's depiction of the hajj journey, where the pilgrims' physical trials are balanced by their unwavering spiritual strength. These examples illustrate how *safarnama* serves as both a record of external circumstances and a medium for introspection on inner spiritual experiences.

In *Safarnamah-i*, al-Farahani discusses the pandemic that struck Mecca, focusing on the quarantine system enforced at the time. He records the actions taken by both society and the authorities to establish quarantine centers, known as Sina, along with the designation of temporary lodging areas for afflicted pilgrims, including tents, quarters, and other buildings. Additionally, al-Farahani describes methods used by earlier societies to combat disease spread, such as employing sulfur *bokhur kebrit* as a disinfectant. Moreover, he emphasizes the pilgrims' attitude of acceptance and reliance on God in the face

of the pandemic threat, where they sought peace of mind by remembering Allah SWT and surrendering to His will in all circumstances.

The *Safarnamah-i* by Mirza offers a unique perspective on the spiritual and social dimensions of pandemics through the lens of travel literature. Previous studies on pandemics have primarily focused on historical analysis, plague rulings, and disease prevention. For example, the historical emergence of pandemics has been examined in works such as Mohammed Amine El-Bezzaz's, *Tarekh al-Majaa wa al-Awbiae bi al-Maghreb* (1992) and Ali Mubarak's, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya al-Jadida* (1886). Meanwhile, studies focusing on disease prevention include Luqa Q., *Risalah fi Tadbir Safar al-Hajj* (1992), Muhammad Sadiq, *Kawkab al-Haj Fi Sayr al-Mahmal Bahrain wa Sayrihi Barran* (1884), and Ben Abdelwahhab al-Ghassani, *Rihlat al-Wazir fi Iftikak al-Assir* (1690).

The *safarnama* intertwines personal observations, societal responses, and spiritual reflections. This combination provides a multidimensional narrative that captures the lived experiences of individuals and communities during times of crisis. In contrast to legal or theological treatises, which often focus on religious duties, pandemic rulings, and divine wisdom, the *safarnama* offers a vivid portrayal of real-life experiences, illustrating how faith and resilience are expressed through everyday challenges. Al-Farahani's narrative captures not only the implementation of quarantine protocols and disease prevention strategies but also explores the psychological and emotional reactions of pilgrims, focusing on themes such as acceptance, trust in God, and communal spiritual solidarity.

However, studies on pandemics through the lens of travel literature, such as *safarnama*, remain limited. The *safarnama*, exemplified by Al-Farahani's work, offers a multidimensional perspective encompassing personal observations, societal responses, and spiritual reflections during a pandemic. This area has been largely unexplored in previous research. Thus, this study addresses this gap by highlighting the lived experiences of individuals and communities during pandemics within the spiritual and cultural context, as documented through travel literature.

Safarnamah-i is not merely a travel record but a profound reflection on the spiritual resilience of the pilgrims. This experience underscores that hajj is a spiritual journey that fortifies the soul with values of endurance, humility, and unity within the ummah, making them more steadfast in facing life's challenges. Despite these difficult circumstances,

they demonstrated religious solidarity and strength, formed from deep-rooted faith.

Safarnamah-i offers valuable insights for contemporary society, particularly in managing crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This work provides relevant and practical perspectives on how religious and social values serve as guidance in navigating crises. Therefore, this article aims to explore the spiritual concepts of the Hajj pilgrims by employing the (IGST) analytical framework.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research design by analyzing the work *Safarnamah-i* by Mirza Mohammad Hosayn al-Farahani, using Imam Al-Ghazali's Spiritual Theory (IGST). Through this work, insights into how communities address crises like pandemics can be identified and analyzed, particularly concerning the inner spiritual practices of Hajj pilgrims. In this study, Imam Al-Ghazali's Spiritual Theory (IGST) serves as the main framework to understand the inner spiritual dimensions depicted by al-Farahani in *Safarnamah-i*.

Broadly, the (IGST) emphasizes the importance of the relationship between a servant and Allah SWT, as well as how spiritual practices can aid in overcoming life's challenges. By applying the (IGST), this study explores how al-Farahani portrays the inner spiritual practices of Hajj pilgrims as a means to attain inner peace and resilience during a pandemic.

The methodology involves a systematic close reading of the *Safarnamah-i* text, with a focus on identifying recurring themes such as resilience, patience, and acceptance displayed by Hajj pilgrims. This thematic analysis enables the study to uncover how spiritual values and practices are interwoven within the pilgrims' experiences, particularly in the context of enduring pandemics and crises. Secondary sources, including relevant academic literature and historical accounts, are consulted to contextualize and support the analysis.

By synthesizing insights from (IGST) and the themes extracted from the text, the study aims to demonstrate how spiritual practices and religious values not only shape individual resilience but also strengthen communal bonds during challenging times. This methodological framework provides a holistic understanding of how narratives like *Safarnamah-i* offer guidance and inspiration for facing life's difficulties.

IMAM AL-GHAZALI’S SPIRITUAL THEORY

Imam al-Ghazali, fully named Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Ghazali at-Tusi, is a renowned Islamic scholar whose contributions have served as a timeless reference (Mahmood, A. R. et al. 2022). The title al-Ghazali is derived from his birthplace, the village of Ghazalah, located in the city of Tus, Iran (Awang, J. et al. 2022). He significantly advanced Islamic scholarship, particularly through his contributions to Islamic philosophy, including the development of Imam al-Ghazali’s Spiritual Theory.

Broadly, Imam al-Ghazali’s Spiritual Theory is an approach grounded in Islamic principles, emphasizing faith and piety towards Allah SWT. By applying this theory, an individual can attain tranquility of heart, soul, emotion, and sound reasoning. This theory integrates spiritual and religious principles, which are essential for emotional regulation. Salleh, S., et al. (2022), in their article Addressing Mental Health Issues Through a Psycho-Spiritual Approach, assert that emotional control rooted in spirituality is a powerful method for managing mental health issues.

Al-Ghazali’s legacy includes his esteemed work *Ihya’ ‘Ulumuddin*, which extensively discusses

principles and methods of Sufism and Islamic jurisprudence (Nurul Hartini et al. 2019 & Mohd Zhaffar, N. et al. 2022). In the field of Islamic philosophy, Imam al-Ghazali has made substantial contributions, including his Spiritual Theory (IGST), which serves as a framework for religiously guided behavior and attitudes. This theory emphasizes spiritual education, incorporating the elements of heart, intellect, self, and spirit (Iqbal, A. M. 2013).

Generally, (IGST) focuses on the aspects of spirit, self, intellect, and heart. In *Ihya’ ‘Ulumuddin*, the heart is linked to the concepts of divinity and spirituality. The heart plays a crucial role in guiding a person towards either praiseworthy or blameworthy paths. In this context, the heart is understood as being subtle, divine, and spiritual. When the heart functions well, it leads to a more prosperous life.

According to Imam al-Ghazali in *Ihya’ ‘Ulumuddin*, (IGST) outlines four core principles:

1. Creed
2. External Worship
3. Purification of the Self
4. Noble Character

Each of these four principles comprises ten elements that must be fulfilled. Table 1.0 details Imam al-Ghazali’s Spiritual Theory (IGST).

TABLE 1. The four principles of Imam al-Ghazali’s Spiritual Theory (IGST)

Principle	Principle Elements
Akidah	<i>Zat Allah</i> S.W.T/ <i>Kekuasaan Allah</i> S.W./ <i>Iradat Allah</i> S.W.T/ <i>Sama’ & Basar</i> Allah S.W.T
Ibadah Zahiriah	Prayer/Fasting/Zikr/Reading the Quran/Charity/Following the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW/ Enjoying good and forbidding evil (<i>Amar Ma’ruf Nahi Munkar</i>)
Tazkiyat al-Nafs	Control of Anger / Avoiding Envy / Avoiding Greed / Avoiding Arrogance
Akhlah Karimah	Fear (<i>Khauf</i>)/ Patience (<i>Sabr</i>)/ Gratitude (<i>Shukr</i>)/ Contentment (<i>Reda</i>)/ Sincerity (<i>Ikhlas</i>) and Honesty (<i>Jujur</i>)/ Trust in Allah (<i>Tawakkal</i>)/ Remembering Death

The above diagram illustrates the four components applied in the Imam al-Ghazali Spiritual Theory (IGST): Creed, External Worship, Purification of the Self, and Noble Character. However, this text focuses on only two of the four principles, namely, External Worship and Noble Character, which are summarized as follows:

1. External Worship:

This includes practices such as prayer, recitation of the Qur’an, almsgiving, charity, fasting, pilgrimage, remembrance of God, earning lawful sustenance, enjoining good and forbidding evil, and following the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW.

2. Noble Character:

Encompasses traits like fear of God, repentance, gratitude, patience, asceticism, sincerity, reliance on God, love, acceptance, and remembrance of death.

In essence, this theory is rooted in the teachings of Islamic mysticism, aimed at purifying one’s soul and heart from negative emotions.

TYPES OF HAJJ PILGRIMS’ SPIRITUALITY DURING THE PANDEMIC

Hajj, as the fifth pillar of Islam, is performed during a specific period, namely in the month of *Zulhijah*.

It involves a pilgrimage to the Kaaba to carry out acts of worship, including circumambulation, ritual walking, and standing in Arafah, among other rituals observed at designated times (Hendriyadi, I. 2019).

In general, a person's conduct in worship becomes more apparent during Hajj, where large gatherings of Muslims focus on shared religious rituals. The crowded and densely populated environment often prompts certain behaviors among pilgrims, which become especially relevant in the context of a pandemic (Sulong, J. et al. 2014).

During challenging situations like a pandemic, faith in Allah SWT and religious practices become a vital source of strength for Hajj pilgrims. They believe that every trial is part of Allah's decree, with wisdom underlying each event. Strong faith helps them to be resilient and patient, offering peace when faced with various threats. For instance, the practice of prayer and remembrance serves as a means to alleviate anxiety and attain inner peace (Mokhtar, A. A. & Mohd Noor, M. 2021).

Research on the spiritual practices of Hajj pilgrims during a pandemic highlights how religious belief plays a crucial role in providing calm and mental strength in times of crisis. Previous studies indicate that a strong spiritual foundation helps individuals cope with health-related stresses, such as those brought on by a pandemic. For example, Ayob, M. A. S. et al. (2024) assert that faith-based resilience enables individuals to face difficult situations more effectively.

Additionally, psychological approaches like mindfulness and spirituality-based meditation have been shown to help better manage emotions during tough times (Rahman, S. N. A., & Ahmad, N. S. 2024). Salleh, N. et al. (2022) emphasize that references to the Quran and hadith offer guidance on the importance of resilience and patience in facing challenges. In conclusion, these religious values are not only historically relevant but also essential for future generations in addressing challenges like pandemics.

Historically, Muslim communities have shown awareness in managing outbreaks through practices such as quarantine. Abdul Rashid et al. (2022) highlight that religious values play a crucial role, especially in challenging situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. This aligns with studies by Md Nawi, N. H. & Megat Ahmad, P. H. (2020) and Osman, A. & Yahya, S. A. (2018), which suggest that religiously based coping strategies can enhance a community's psychological well-being. This

underscores the importance of religious and social support for Hajj pilgrims in handling the pressures of a pandemic.

As described in *Safarnamah-i*, Hajj pilgrims adopted spiritual practices such as patience, resilience, and acceptance during quarantine. These practices refer to (Inner Spirituality) a deeply personal, reflective aspect of religious practice and inner spiritual journey.

For Hajj pilgrims, (Inner Spirituality) is especially significant as it enables them to engage more meaningfully in worship, especially when facing trials like a pandemic. Pilgrims who embrace these inner spiritual values tend to demonstrate greater devotion, patience, and acceptance, enriching their Hajj experience on a spiritual level.

In other words, (Inner Spirituality) entails seeking purpose and meaning in life beyond material concerns (Nuraeni, H. A., Albanur, A. T., & Akhadi, V. K. H. 2024). The discussion of the (Inner Spirituality) practices of Hajj pilgrims including devotion, patience, and acceptance will be further elaborated in the following section.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES OF HAJJ PILGRIMS AMIDST THE CRISIS

As previously discussed, the practice of inner spiritual acts is essential in performing the Hajj pilgrimage, including obedience and patience during quarantine. The depiction of the obedience and patience of the pilgrims is illustrated in the following excerpt (1):

This quarantine in no way causes any loss or expense for the Ottoman Empire. Whatever they expend on it, they get back double from the pilgrims. Exorbitant sums go to the quarantine employees. When officials are posted to the quarantine, it is as if [they had been appointed] officials in charge of fleecing and plundering the pilgrims (Al-Farahani 1990).

Based on excerpt (1), the obedience and patience of the Hajj pilgrims can be implicitly observed through their willingness to endure the quarantine process, despite the unfairness in its implementation. This injustice is depicted by the authorities imposing high charges solely for entering the quarantine facilities.

In excerpt (1), al-Farahani illustrates the exploitation of the Hajj pilgrims with the phrase: *whatever they expend on it, they get back double from the pilgrims*. In other words, this statement implies that all charges levied by the authorities

against the pilgrims during quarantine will yield a return of twice the amount.

The exploitation of the pilgrims is further emphasized by the phrase: *is as if they had been appointed officials in charge of fleecing and plundering the pilgrims*. The terms “fleecing” and “plundering” indicate that the misconduct by the authorities toward the pilgrims is primarily financial. From this perspective, the actions taken by the authorities are unjust, especially considering the additional charges imposed on admission tickets, which are particularly burdensome for financially constrained pilgrims.

Nevertheless, the pilgrims’ obedience to the authorities, even in an unjust situation, reflects the principle of piety emphasized by Imam Al-Ghazali. According to Al-Ghazali, obedience to authority and regulations is a crucial aspect of achieving harmony within society. In this context, the Hajj pilgrims exhibit respect and trust in the existing system, even while recognizing the deception involved. This obedience demonstrates their commitment to religious teachings and their understanding that every test and difficulty is a part of their spiritual journey. Al-Ghazali believes that sincere obedience to Allah and His laws leads to tranquility and peace of mind.

Despite facing exploitation and pressure from the authorities, the Hajj pilgrims continue to exhibit a sense of obedience, which reflects the principle of Noble Character within the (IGST) framework. Imam Al-Ghazali asserts that these values strengthen the heart in confronting trials. Through their obedience, the pilgrims demonstrate earnestness in safeguarding their hearts from being tainted by worldly anger or dissatisfaction.

In contrast, the heart of the authorities exploiting the pilgrims is tainted by worldly desires that dominate their souls. This greed not only diverges from the principles of Noble Character, which teach sincerity of heart but also reflects a failure to practice the values of piety and trustworthiness religion advocates. Therefore, true obedience in the Hajj pilgrimage also demands adherence to social ethics and sound governance, wherein every leader is obligated to practice justice and moderation in all aspects of life, including during a pandemic.

The patience and obedience of the Hajj pilgrims are further highlighted in excerpt (2):

All the pilgrims must pay them one and a quarter Levant dollars per person and take tickets. They charged some of them who were not knowledgeable about the operation of the quarantine

from one and a half to two Levant dollars for the tickets. They cheated in some other ways, too. For example, they took imperials, liras, and other gold money for less [than they were worth]. As soon as they had collected the money from all the pilgrims and given out the tickets, then the accountant stood at the door to the building with two soldiers and inspected the people’s tickets (Al-Farahani 1990).

Excerpt (2) serves as an elaboration on the form of deception perpetrated by the authorities as described in excerpt (1). One of the deceptive practices depicted in excerpt (2) includes charging “from one and a half to two Levant dollars for the tickets.” Based on excerpts (1) and (2), al-Farahani aims to illustrate that the quarantine centers at that time had a singular purpose: the financial exploitation of the Hajj pilgrims.

According to Davis, R. (1967) in *Money in the Levant*, the Levant dollar mentioned in excerpt (2) refers to a silver shilling, also known as the Maria Theresa thaler (MTT), which was used in trade activities in the past. This silver shilling was named after Maria Theresa, who ruled over Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia. From a linguistic perspective, the language used in excerpt (2) does not exhibit any elements of sarcasm or irony. This indicates that although the Hajj pilgrims faced deception, they maintained their patience in confronting the trials presented by Allah S.W.T during their worship.

The obedience and patience demonstrated by the Hajj pilgrims encompass their willingness to sacrifice their possessions to fulfill their religious obligations. As noted in excerpts (1) and (2), the pilgrims were compelled to spend significant sums of money merely to enter the quarantine facilities, with the charges being particularly burdensome for those from less privileged backgrounds. This situation demanded not only physical endurance but also mental and spiritual resilience, as they remained steadfast in their principles of faith and obedience despite encountering injustice and exploitation.

According to the (IGST) framework, patience, perseverance, and obedience are essential elements for individuals to effectively carry out their acts of worship. This is because the essence of worship necessitates the ability to endure challenges both mentally and spiritually. Imam Al-Ghazali asserts in *Minhajul Abidin* that those who cannot withstand the trials of patience during worship will fail to grasp the true essence and purpose of the rituals they perform. Furthermore, Imam Al-Ghazali categorizes patience and perseverance into four dimensions, as illustrated in Figure 1.

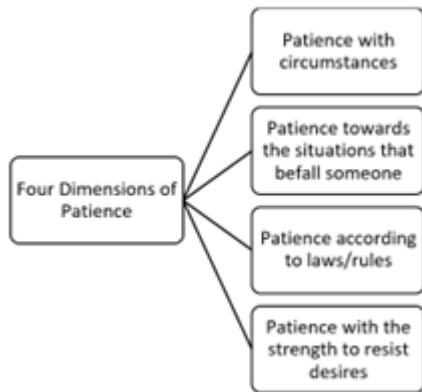


FIGURE 1. Four dimensions of patience according to Imam al-Ghazali

Based on these four types, the pilgrims can be categorized as exhibiting patience and perseverance that are not based on choice and do not have the option to refuse. This is because during the quarantine period, the pilgrims faced directives from the authorities. The authorities issued orders that must be followed by them; failure to comply would prevent them from performing the Hajj properly. In other words, the pilgrims had no choice but to adhere to the instructions from the authorities.

From this perspective, they accepted all the decrees of Allah SWT and did not reject them; rather, they embraced them by embodying the qualities of patience, resilience, and obedience during quarantine. Through the actions of the pilgrims, avoiding conflict is encouraged over confrontation, as avoiding blameworthy traits is indeed more virtuous.

Overall, the heart, soul, and mind are essential components in the formation of good character. If a person's heart is pure, their actions will be good. Conversely, an impure heart will lead to negative behaviors. Just as pilgrims who intend to worship and perform Hajj possess pure hearts motivated by the desire to draw closer to Allah SWT and attain His pleasure during worship they view any malice or negative actions from the authorities during quarantine as a test. They believe that a clean heart enables rational thinking and guides one towards performing good deeds while fulfilling their religious obligations to Allah SWT.

In conclusion, al-Farahani illustrates that when engaging in worship, patience, resilience, and obedience are essential traits that every pilgrim must cultivate, especially during the Hajj. To achieve an accepted Hajj, various trials and tests must be faced. However, if one engages in self-reflection,

consistently practices patience, and places their trust in Allah SWT, the pilgrims will surely experience the sweetness of the wisdom that comes from patience.

In general, every act of worship entails its own challenges and trials; thus, one must always remain patient, steadfast, obedient, and maintain a positive outlook in the face of unforeseen tests. Patience, obedience, and resilience are steps toward strengthening the bond between a servant and their Creator.

Reflecting on the experiences of pilgrims in the past serves as a reminder for today's community to cultivate the qualities of patience, resilience, and obedience in their worship. Al-Farahani's work illustrates that during the pandemic, pilgrims exhibited humility in their worship. This humility helps to dispel blameworthy traits within the pilgrims. As reported by Abu Hurairah, the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W said:

مَنْ حَجَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتَ فَلَمْ يَرْفُثْ وَلَمْ يَفْسُقْ رَجَعَ كَمَا وَلَدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ

The meaning is:

Whoever performs the Hajj while avoiding foul and indecent words, and does not commit sinful acts, will return as pure and clean from sins as on the day he was born (i.e., in a state of purity) (Narrated by al-Bukhari (1819).

The performance of Hajj undoubtedly tests a person's resilience, patience, and obedience, especially in the context of a pandemic that instills fear in the hearts of society. Emotional turmoil is inevitable, as a pandemic is a contagious disease that can lead to death. During the pilgrimage, the pilgrims remain steadfast and patient in facing the challenges posed by the pandemic, as they adhere to the command of Allah SWT in Surah al-Taghabun, verse 11:

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

The meaning is:

No calamity befalls a person except by the permission of Allah; and whoever believes in Allah, He will guide his heart. And Allah is All-Knowing of everything.

Next, the last inner practice, which is contentment, is illustrated in excerpt (3):

سپس پزشک ارشد قرنطینه و چند نفر از کارکنانش به کشتی بخار آمدند و به مسافران نگاهی انداختند و رفتند. با اینکه گروهی از افراد در کشتی بخار به اسهال خونی مبتلا بودند، پزشک ارشد به هر حال نگاهش را به سمت دیگری برگرداند و آن واقعیت را نادیده گرفت. به دلیل دوستی و آشنایی قبلی با ناخدای دوم، او گواهی سلامت صادر کرد و رفت. گفته شد که پزشک ارشد به عنوان بهای سکوتش، از ناخدا رشوه گرفته است.

Then the chief doctor of the quarantine and several of his employees came to the steamer, looked at the passengers, and left. Even though a group of people on the steamer were afflicted with dysentery, the chief doctor nevertheless looked the other way and ignored the fact. Out of friendship and previous acquaintance with the second captain, he issued a health certificate and left. They said the chief doctor took a bribe from the captain as the price for [his] silence (Al-Farahani 1990).

Excerpt (3) illustrates the contentment of the pilgrims towards the indifference exhibited by health officials while treating patients aboard the ship. Al-Farahani depicts the trials faced by the pilgrims as stemming from the injustices perpetrated by the health officials, who neglected the health conditions of the pilgrims and issued health certificates without thorough examinations.

In general, the fundamental role of health officials is to treat patients and to take full responsibility for any issues related to a patient's illness. According to the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Organizations (JCA 2002), there are 7 *Patient Safety Standards* that must be adhered to, one of which is that patients have the right to receive appropriate treatment regardless of their background, and that medical officials must take full responsibility for their patients' conditions.

However, the account provided by Al-Farahani in his notes, stating that "then the chief doctor of the quarantine and several of his employees came to the steamer and looked at the passengers and left," does not meet these 7 Patient Safety Standards. In fact, the complacency shown by the health officials towards the pilgrims could endanger their lives during the quarantine.

From the perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali, the actions of the health officials in this situation demonstrate a violation of the spiritual principles that should be upheld by a Muslim, particularly regarding the treatment of others. By adhering to these principles, health officials should strive to

provide adequate treatment and take responsibility, uphold noble morals, and maintain their soul and faith in the face of challenges, such as those experienced by the pilgrims during the pandemic.

Upholding noble morals refers to the individual's effort to maintain good and ethical behavior, such as showing compassion, empathy, and responsibility in interactions with others. In the context of health officials operating during a pandemic, their actions should reflect high ethical standards by providing transparent and effective treatment to pilgrims, regardless of their backgrounds.

Furthermore, maintaining one's soul and faith means preserving an individual's mental and spiritual state when facing various challenges and trials. In the context of the pandemic, pilgrims face fears and anxieties regarding their health. Therefore, health officials should act as sources of support, offering comfort to the pilgrims by treating them professionally and demonstrating a calming demeanor, as well as instilling confidence that they are not alone in facing these trials.

In other words, the good actions of health officials involve not only physical treatment but also address emotional and spiritual aspects, where they should work to ensure the holistic well-being of the pilgrims, strengthening their belief in Allah and encouraging them to remain patient and content in the face of their current trials.

The contentment of the pilgrims can be viewed as a manifestation of the concepts of trust in Allah and patience within Al-Ghazali's spiritual theory (IGST). In facing a situation where health officials neglect their responsibilities, the pilgrims demonstrate a spirit of acceptance and dependence on Allah, understanding that everything that happens is part of His divine decree. This contentment not only provides mental strength to the pilgrims but also helps them maintain tranquility amidst physical and mental challenges.

Additionally, the negligence exhibited by the health officials is seen as a violation of the principles of Noble Character, where they should carry out their duties with integrity and responsibility. Imam Al-Ghazali emphasizes that every action should be based on moral and ethical values inherent in Islam, and in this context, health officials should fulfill their trust diligently. Such a breach of duty is contrary to the spiritual values that a Muslim should uphold.

In this context, the emphasis on the contentment of the pilgrims not only reflects their spiritual strength but also serves as a social critique of

systems and individuals who fail to fulfill their responsibilities adequately. In Islamic theology, reliance on Allah SWT is a fundamental principle in navigating life. The contentment of the pilgrims reflects their attitude of trust in God, wherein they accept all decrees and trials with sincerity. Through this acceptance, they demonstrate their trust in Allah's decree and embrace what has been destined for them.

THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF HAJJ PILGRIMS DURING THE PANDEMIC

In this discussion, several phases can be linked to the spiritual theory of Imam Al-Ghazali (IGST). The first phase identified in the spiritual journey of Hajj pilgrims is patience, resilience, obedience, and acceptance of all the trials faced. As illustrated in excerpts (1), (2), and (3), the Hajj pilgrims encountered various challenges during their quarantine, such as movement restrictions, exploitation, neglect, and dishonesty from the authorities. In this situation, the resilience of the pilgrims became a crucial factor in overcoming these constraints.

Moreover, the pilgrims were also exposed to exploitation and dishonesty from the authorities. This situation reflects a painful reality, where they were subjected to unjust charges and had to confront deceitful practices that harmed them. Despite facing pressure and injustice, the pilgrims' attitudes of patience and obedience remained intact. They endeavored to adhere to the directives and regulations established, even though there might have been dissatisfaction with the actions of the authorities.

All these challenges tested the pilgrims' acceptance of Allah's decrees. They learned to respond to each trial with an attitude of acceptance, understanding that everything that occurred was part of a divine plan. Through this process, the pilgrims not only endured physical trials but also developed mental and spiritual strength that could reinforce their faith. This approach not only provided them with mental fortitude but also helped them remain focused on the ultimate purpose of their spiritual journey, which is to draw closer to Allah SWT.

After facing trials with acceptance, the Hajj pilgrims found tranquility and peace, even amidst the injustice experienced during quarantine. In Imam Al-Ghazali's theory (IGST), this phase reflects

a level of taqwa, where individuals attain a deeper awareness of Allah's presence in their lives.

The next phase is self-reflection, which is evident when the Hajj pilgrims utilize their negative experiences during quarantine as wisdom to strengthen their relationship with Allah SWT and enhance their awareness of His justice and wisdom. In this phase, the pilgrims use these experiences to draw closer to Allah SWT, seeking His guidance and strength in facing the trials they encounter.

Overall, the narrative of the spiritual journey of the Hajj pilgrims, as depicted by Al-Farahani during the pandemic, provides profound insights into how faith can imbue deeper meaning when facing various life challenges. By applying the spiritual principles of Imam Al-Ghazali (IGST), we can see the importance of obedience, patience, acceptance, self-reflection, and taqwa in shaping the spiritual strength of pilgrims as they confront numerous challenges.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the heart, desires, spirit, and intellect are essential components in the formation of good character. If an individual's heart is pure, then their actions will be good. Conversely, a corrupt heart will lead to undesirable behavior. For instance, Hajj pilgrims, who embark on their journey with the intention of worship, possess a pure heart aimed at drawing closer to Allah SWT and seeking His pleasure during their acts of worship.

Therefore, any envy or negative actions exhibited by the authorities during their quarantine can be viewed as a trial for the pilgrims, as they believe that a clean heart enables rational thinking and guides them to perform good deeds while fulfilling their religious obligations to Allah SWT.

Al-Farahani, in his *Safarnameh-i*, illustrates that patience and resilience are essential traits that every Hajj pilgrim must cultivate, especially in the context of fulfilling their Hajj. To achieve an accepted Hajj, numerous trials and challenges must be endured. However, if an individual engages in self-reflection while remaining patient and placing their trust in Allah SWT, the Hajj community will undoubtedly experience the sweetness of the wisdom found in patience.

In general, every act of worship comes with its unique challenges and trials; thus, one must always remain patient, steadfast, obedient, and optimistic regarding unforeseen tests. These inner practices

are crucial steps in strengthening the relationship between a servant and their Creator. In conclusion, the challenges described by Al-Farahani serve to educate individuals in balancing the values of praiseworthy character during worship, particularly in the context of the pandemic. By confronting these various obstacles, Hajj pilgrims can fortify their relationship with Allah and enhance their spiritual awareness, making their worship experience more meaningful and profound.

Additionally, this study offers a novel perspective on Al-Farahani's Safarnameh, linking it to the emotional journey of performing Hajj amid the COVID pandemic, because it examines the ways in which traditional Islamic concepts can shape contemporary approaches to emotional regulation, resilience-building, and moral education. The findings suggest that crisis and disruption may enhance taqwa (God-consciousness) and promote spiritual self-regulation among pilgrims, thus it also contributes to developing pragmatic approaches to supporting Muslim communities facing contemporary challenges and uncertainties.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The conceptualization of the study was carried out by Firuz-Akhtar Lubis, Zulkarnain Mohamed, and Nur Asyiqin Zohkarnain. The development of the research methodology was overseen by Zulkarnain Mohamed and Firuz-Akhtar Lubis. Text selection was managed by Firuz-Akhtar Lubis and Nur Asyiqin Zohkarnain, while the theoretical framework was developed by Zulkarnain Mohamed. Abdul Halim Haji Mohamad Bohari contributed to the literature review. Data analysis was conducted by Firuz-Akhtar Lubis and Nur Asyiqin Zohkarnain, who also prepared the initial draft of the manuscript. The manuscript was reviewed by Firuz-Akhtar Lubis, Zulkarnain Mohamed, and Abdul Halim Haji Mohamad Bohari. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) GENERATED TEXT DECLARATION

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT from OpenAI to refine the manuscript's linguistic structure and improve its flow. Following the use of this service, the author critically reviewed and edited the content to ensure academic rigor. The author has independently re-evaluated all arguments, particularly the spiritual and historical analysis, and takes full responsibility for the factual accuracy and final content of the publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research or the findings presented in this article.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study did not involve human or animal subjects. The research is based on the analysis of historical Persian travelogues obtained from publicly accessible archives and libraries. No personally identifiable information was used, and ethical approval was therefore not required.

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