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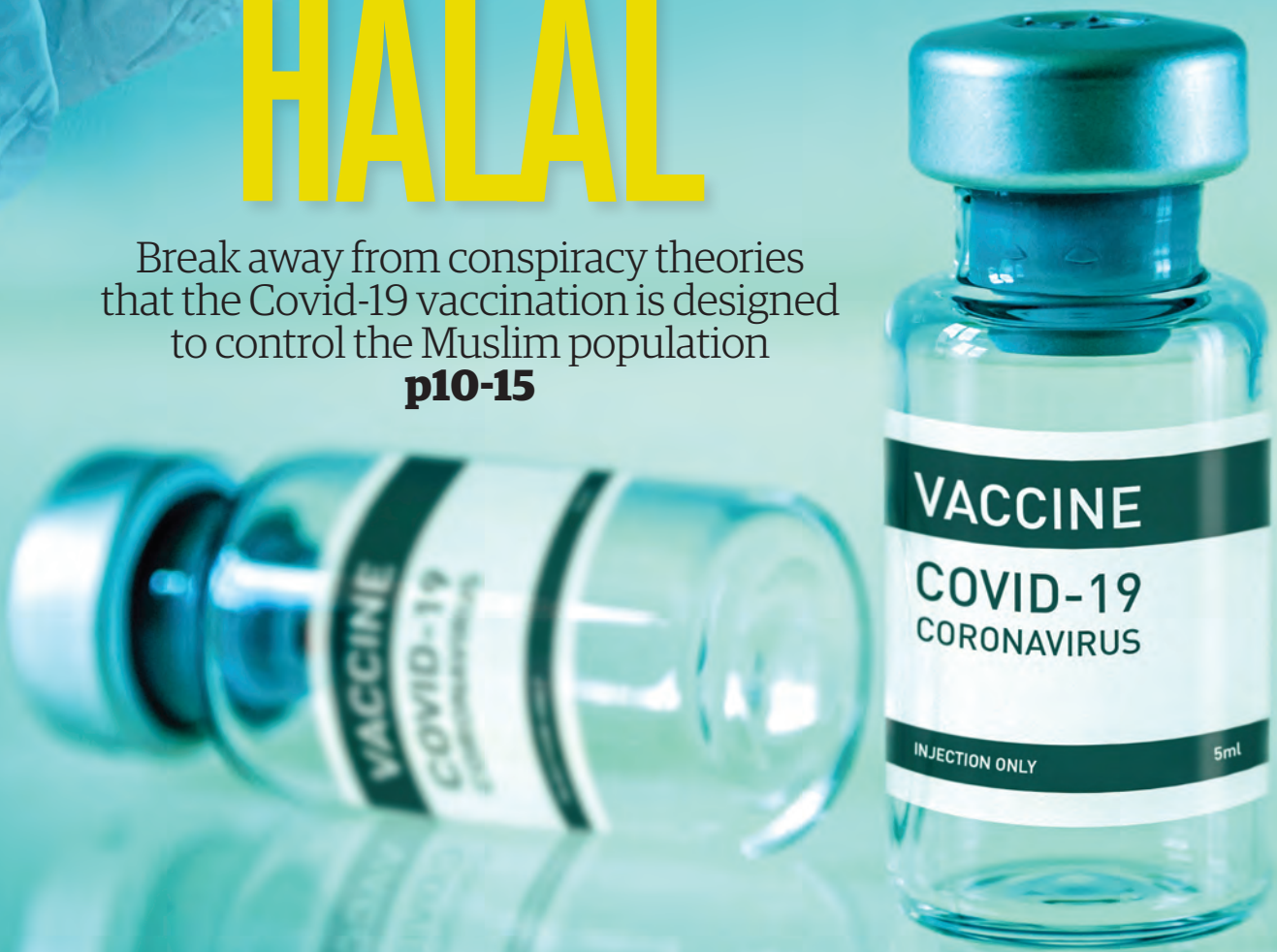


@Halal



SAFE AND HALAL

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The challenge begins; win it

WITH the Covid-19 vaccines rolling out the world over, it is expected that tourism would be ignited again. Thailand, for instance, recently announced they would be accepting vaccinated tourists into Phuket. That would be the order of the day, but now popularly known as “the new norm”. Islamic tourism would not be left out of the race. Muslim countries would now be jostling for positions, for their place in the sun. All that pent-up energy, the urge to travel and especially the knotted purse-strings for over a year would now be cut loose. Where will Muslim tourists go? Which would be their favourite Muslim-friendly destinations be? It is a no-brainer. MALAYSIA. Consider this:

- The global Muslim population has surpassed three billion.
- The Muslim population has the fastest growth rate.
- The growth drivers are Saudi Arabia, UAE, Indonesia, China, Malaysia, India and Singapore.
- In 2019, before the pandemic hit, Muslim travel was worth US\$194 billion (that’s almost RM1 trillion).

Malaysia’s Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) has been in overdrive. They knew this day would come when the demand for Muslim- destinations would be staggering. And they will have to be ready when that happens. True, there would be apprehensions. Would-be travellers will not dive right in. Caution would prevail, and yet, it is a reality. Muslim travellers’ budgets would open up even more now that Japan has announced they will not accept foreign spectators for the Tokyo Olympics this year. The needs of Muslim travellers are simple:

1. Places for prayers.
2. Halal food.

In both aspects, Malaysia is streets ahead of most, if not all, other Muslim countries. There are mosques and suraus in every Malaysian district. Halal food and beverage (F&B) outlets are on every street corner. And more ... Malaysia is a melting pot of diverse races, religions and cultures. Not something you get everywhere. There you go, ITC. The fruits of Islamic tourism are ripe for the picking. The time is now. The private sector too should rise to the occasion.



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Are the vaccines halal?

Covid-19, vaccines and vaccination for Preservation of Life



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THE Moderna Covid-19 vaccine contains the following ingredients: messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA), lipids (SM-102, polyethene glycol [PEG] 2000 dimyristoyl glycerol [DMG], cholesterol, and 1,2-distearoyl-sn-glycerol-3-phosphocholine [DSPC]), tromethamine, tromethamine hydrochloride, acetic acid, sodium acetate, and sucrose.

The Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine (Comirnaty®) includes the following ingredients: mRNA, lipids ((4-hydroxybutyl)azanediyl)bis(hexane-6,1-diyl)bis(2-hexyldecanoate), 2 [(polyethylene glycol)-2000]-N,N-ditetradecylacetamide, 1,2-distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine, and cholesterol), potassium chloride, monobasic potassium phosphate, sodium chloride, dibasic sodium phosphate dihydrate, and sucrose.

All of these substances are synthetic in nature or plant-based materials, and hence the vaccines are permissible to be used by Muslims.

The Janssen/J&J Covid-19 vaccines con-

tain a replication-incompetent recombinant adenovirus type 26 (Ad26) vector expressing the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) spike (S) protein in a stabilised conformation.

The Ad26 vector expressing the SARS-CoV-2 S protein is grown in PER.C6 TetR cells in media containing amino acids and no animal-derived proteins. After propagation, the vaccine is processed through several purification steps, formulated with inactive ingredients and filled into vials.

Each vial also consists of the following inactive ingredients: citric acid monohydrate (0.14 mg), trisodium citrate dihydrate (2.02 mg), ethanol (2.04 mg), 2-hydroxypropyl--cyclodextrin (HBCD) (25.50 mg), polysorbate-80 (0.16 mg), sodium chloride (2.19 mg). Each dose may also contain residual amounts of host cell proteins (≤ 0.15 mcg) and/or host cell DNA (≤ 3 ng).

The CoronaVac® by SinoVac is manufactured by inoculation of SARS-CoV-2 virus (CZ02 Strain) into African Green Monkey Kidney Cell (Vero Cell). The virus is incubated, harvested, inactivated, concentrated, purified

and adsorbed by aluminium hydroxide.

Other excipients include disodium hydrogen phosphate, sodium dihydrogen phosphate and sodium chloride. The Indonesian Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) declared that this vaccine is halal or permissible for Muslims earlier this year.

Vaccine acceptance

There are two extreme groups on the perception of vaccination and especially the Covid-19 vaccine. The first group put all their faith in the vaccine to the extent that they will feel like they will die if they are not able to get it first.

Some are frantically searching for ways to get to the vaccine first. Many were even scammed by people who claim that they can sell the Covid-19 vaccine.

The other extreme end is the group that rejects vaccination altogether, citing conspiracy theories. Many are misinformed. Some Muslims believe that the vaccine is not halal, and the research was not performed correctly.

Ironically, they obtained such information from some misinformed Muslim scholars. It is essential to get correct data from experts on



the subject matter.

The vaccine will complement all the preventive public health measures being implemented so far.

Even after receiving the complete doses of the vaccine, we should continue to practice good hygienic practice, including wearing the facemask and avoiding crowded places. None of the vaccines is 100 per cent efficacious.

The availability of the vaccine is a blessing from God and come as an “ikhtiar” or effort we can take. The result will eventually be determined by God.

Justification to seek medical treatment

God, The All Knowing, creates diseases as one of the forms of tests to mankind, and at the same time, He provides the means and cures to illnesses and diseases.

Thus, it has become the person’s responsibility with any illness to seek suitable treatment for curing the infection. This is understandable through authentic sources of Islamic teachings – the Qur’an and sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him, PBUH):

“.....*There emerges from their (bees) bellies a drink, varying in colors, in which there is healing for people. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who give thought*”.

[Q. An-Nahl 16: 69]

“*Make use of the two remedies: honey and the Qur’an.*”

[Ibnu Majah, At-Tirmidhi]

“*There is no disease that God has created, except that He also has created its treatment.*”

[Al-Bukhari]

For the latter prophetic tradition, the following addition exists in the collections of prophetic sayings by Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi: “There is no cure for only one illness”. The Prophet was asked, “*What disease is it?*”, he answered: Old age.

[Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi]

“*Indeed in cupping (hijama) there is a cure*”.

[Muslim]

“*The black seed (habbah al-sawda’) is a means of cure for every ailment except death*”.

[Al-Bukhari, Muslim]

Besides finding medication when getting a disease or illness, mankind is advised to take measures to avoid the disease. This can be understood clearly in the teachings of Islam.

First, Muslims’ requirement to consume halal and toyyib food - ensuring that the food consumed is lawful and reasonable (clean, safe, wholesome, nutritious, etc.). Islam also has emphasised the importance of cleanliness by making it a part of faith.

Adopting a clean, hygienic and healthy lifestyle is an essential factor for human health

and spiritual development. The purpose is to ensure good physical and spiritual health. It is in line with Maqasid al-Shari’ah (the higher objectives of the Shari’ah) in protecting and preserving faith and life.

Second, if there is a severe communicable disease breakout such as the Covid-19 pandemic, Islam teaches the importance of restricting movements in and out of the affected place.

“*If you hear of an outbreak of plague in a land, do not enter it, and if the plague breaks out in a place while you are in it, do not leave that place.*”

[Al-Bukhari, Muslim]

During Caliph Umar al-Khattab’s reign, Shams’ region (part of present-day Syria) suffered from cholera outbreaks. Caliph Umar cancelled the intention to visit Shams upon learning about the cholera plague and ordered his companions to return to the city of Madinah (in present-day Saudi Arabia).

One of the companions asked him: “Is it flight from the decree of God?” Caliph Umar replied: “Yes. We flee from the decree of God to the decree of God”. In one saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), “Run away from the leper as you would run away from a lion”.

It shows that when diseases could be easily transmitted from one person to another, we should take the necessary actions to break the transmission chain and not throw ourselves into destruction.

“.....*and do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction*”.

[Q. Al-Baqarah 2: 195]

With advances in medical sciences and technology, mankind managed to discover and/or design and manufacture new drugs and vaccines to increase the treatment arsenal in combating various diseases and illnesses.

The use of medicines and vaccines for treatment and curing diseases and illness does not violate any shari’ah principle. Still, in fact, it promotes the objective of protection and preservation of human life.

Therefore, vaccination can be considered one of the efforts to prevent ourselves from contracting a disease, analogous to avoiding entering an area affected by a pandemic.

General guidelines in seeking medical treatment

It is an obligation for Muslims seeking treatment or healing for any illness or disease to engage with halal sources as understood from the prophetic traditions.

“*God has sent down both the disease and the cure, and He has appointed a cure for every disease, so treat yourselves medically, but use nothing unlawful*”.

[Abu Dawud]

“*God did not make the cure of the illness of Muslims from what is haram (unlawful)*”.

[Al-Bukhari]

However, in certain circumstances, in the absence of halal resources, unlawful or doubtful sources are allowed for medication to protect and preserve life – individual and the community.


This is per an authentic prophetic tradition whereby some sick people received instruction from the Prophet (PBUH) to drink milk and camel urine as a medicine for their condition.

Shafi’i and Hanafi schools of jurisprudence considered camel’s urine to be najis (impure or filth), while the Prophet’s recommendation was to consume camel’s urine and milk was for a situation of compelling necessity, especially if no pure medicine is available to save a life. This coincides with what is mentioned in the Qur’an:

“.....*He has explained in detail to you what He has forbidden you, excepting that to which you are compelled.....*”.

[Q. Al-An’am 6: 119]

“*He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than God. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor*



The use of medicines and vaccines for treatment and curing diseases and illness does not violate any shari’ah principle. Still, in fact, it promotes the objective of protection and preservation of human life.”

transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Verily, God is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful”.

[Q. Al-Baqarah 2: 173]

Based on these verses of the Qur’an, Muslim religious scholars formulated a legal maxim: “Necessity begets prohibited things permissible”.

Consult the people who know

It is the responsibility of those who do not possess the necessary information, knowledge and skill to refer to or consult the experts for clarification and resolve any issue. This includes the seeking of medication and treatment, and it is in line with God’s instruction.

“*We did not send (messengers) before you other than men whom We inspired with revelation. So, ask the people (having the knowledge) of the Reminder (the earlier Scriptures), if you do not know*”.

[Q. An-Nahl 16: 43]

In an authentic collection of hadith in Sahih Muslim, it was narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) passed by people grafting trees. He said, “It would be better if you did not do that.”

They abandoned the practice, and there was a decline in the yield. After some time, the Prophet passed by again and said, “What is wrong with your trees?”

They said, “You said not to do so.” The Prophet replied, “You have better knowledge of the affairs of your world.” We can understand and learn here the importance of asking and consulting subject matter experts, and the consultation is not limited to Muslim experts only.

It is crucial to understand the proper understanding of something before we can pass a ruling on it. Wrong understanding or description of a particular thing may lead to an incorrect ruling.

A principle says: “The ruling upon something can only truly be given once the thing itself has been truly conceptualised”. This is why the need to consult experts is very important to understand the concept and context of a particular issue.

Putting our hope and trust in god

After all possible efforts are made to cure the disease or illness, Muslims are taught to pray and place the outcome or healing on the Will, Consent and Power of the All-Knowing God. He is the Almighty, who created the illness, and He is the One who cures it.

“.....*and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills.....*”

[Q. Al-Baqarah 2: 255]

“.....*and He created all things. And He is, of all things, Knowing*”.

[Q. Al-An’am 6: 101]

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says:

“*Every illness has a cure, and when the proper cure is applied to the disease, it heals by God’s Will.*”

[Al-Bukhari, Muslim]

One of the supplications taught by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in seeking the protection of God from any harm and evil by repeating the following thrice in the morning and afternoon:

“*In the Name of God, Who with His Name nothing can cause harm in the earth nor in the heavens, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.*”

[Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidzi, Ahmad]

After we had strived all our efforts and pray to God, the healing is yet to be found, then we shall be patient with the belief that God wants to give us a great reward. As God says in the Qur’an:

“*O My servants who have believed, fear your Lord. For those who do good in this world is good, and the earth of God is spacious. Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account (limit)*”.

[Q. Az-Zumar 39: 10]

“.....*Indeed, God is with the patient*”.

[Q. Al-Anfal 8: 46]