



## Indonesia and Corona Pandemic: A Preliminary Study of Indonesian Muslim Responses on Covid-19 Pandemic

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### Abstract

This paper explains that in the case of the Corona(Covid-19) pandemic in Indonesia, many Muslim scholars and clerics differed in their response to the Corona outbreak, in which they give a different perspective that confuses people who do not really understand the Islamic teachings associated with this Corona outbreak. However, in the context of the responses of Muslim scholars toward Corona pandemic, it is recognized that the effort to overcome the Corona pandemic (Covid-19) through Medicine and Pharmacy is a human endeavor to strive for human safety in the world. This effort continues even though it is not easy. But many Muslim scholars and religious circles react emotionally and the leaders of these religious organizations will cause many followers or worshipers or members who then no longer believe or are pessimistic and lose confidence in certain sects. The government also cannot take advantage of this opportunity to make the direction of change more rational, more humane and civilized. Though this opportunity for change is available quite often in the span of productive power. In this context, many social scientists, especially anthropologists, have researched extraordinary drastic changes due to epidemics, pandemics or natural disasters, both due to human error and due to extreme pandemics and extreme natural changes. Indonesia as a developing country now is undergoing many unplanned drastic changes, and because of this, many social changes occur irregularly and without direction at all.

**Keywords:** Corona Virus, Covid-19, Muslim, NU, Muhammadiyah, Indonesia,

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## Abstrak

*Tulisan ini menjelaskan bahwa dalam kasus pandemi Corona (Covid-19) di Indonesia, banyak cendekiawan dan ustadz yang berbeda-beda dalam menanggapi wabah Corona, di mana mereka memberikan cara pandang berbeda yang membingungkan masyarakat yang belum begitu memahami ajaran Islam. ajaran yang terkait dengan wabah Corona ini. Namun dalam konteks respon cendekiawan muslim terhadap pandemi Corona, diakui bahwa upaya penanggulangan pandemi Corona (Covid-19) melalui Kedokteran dan Farmasi merupakan upaya manusia untuk memperjuangkan keselamatan manusia di dunia. Upaya ini terus berlanjut meski tidak mudah. Namun banyak cendekiawan Muslim dan kalangan agama bereaksi secara emosional dan para pemimpin organisasi keagamaan tersebut akan menyebabkan banyak pengikut atau jamaah atau anggota yang kemudian tidak lagi percaya atau pesimis dan kehilangan kepercayaan pada sekte tertentu. Pemerintah juga tidak bisa memanfaatkan kesempatan ini untuk membuat arah perubahan lebih rasional, lebih manusiawi dan beradab. Padahal peluang perubahan ini cukup sering tersedia dalam rentang daya produktif. Dalam konteks ini, banyak ilmuwan sosial, terutama antropolog, telah meneliti perubahan drastis yang luar biasa akibat epidemi, pandemi, atau bencana alam, baik karena kesalahan manusia maupun karena pandemi ekstrem dan perubahan alam ekstrem. Indonesia sebagai negara berkembang saat ini sedang mengalami banyak perubahan drastis yang tidak direncanakan, dan karenanya banyak perubahan sosial yang terjadi secara tidak teratur dan tanpa arah sama sekali.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Interaksi Mutualisme, Perubahan Sosial, Perubahan Hukum Islam*

### A. INTRODUCTION

Many scientists have analyzed how the emergence of unplanned and forced social changes that occur due to epidemics or pandemics or natural disasters. Many social scientists, especially anthropologists, have researched extraordinary drastic changes due to epidemics, (Atlani et al., 2000; Klein et al., 1997), pandemics (Rushing, 2018) or natural disasters, both due to human error and due to extreme and extreme natural changes. Many scientists highlight various studies on disaster recovery and reconstruction, some of which show that political, economic and social change is not possible after a disaster; some of these changes often occur after a disaster.

Atlani and Rushing describes the development of the recent HIV epidemic in countries that were previously the Soviet Union. It explores the socio-political and economic roots of drug-injection HIV epidemics associated with drug culture that facilitates HIV transmission. The latest perspective in anthropological research defines disaster as a process or event involving a combination of potentially damaging agents from the natural environment or technology or population in conditions of socially and technologically generated vulnerability (Oliver-Smith, 1996)

In the case of the Corona (Covid-19) pandemic in Indonesia, many Muslim scientists and scholars differed in their response to the Corona outbreak. In fact, many Islamic scholars give a different perspective that confuses people who do not really understand the Islamic teachings associated with this Corona outbreak.

From this basic understanding, three general topic areas have been developed: (a) behavioral and organizational response approaches, (b) social change approaches,



and (c) environmental economic and political approaches, focusing on the historical-structural dimension of vulnerability to hazards, specifically in developing countries.

## **B. DISCUSSIONS**

### **1. The Emergence of Corona Virus**

The first origin of the emergence of the Corona outbreak, reported by the *South China Morning Post* (01/22/2020), mentions the Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan, the market that is the source of this Covid-19 virus outbreak. There are sold 100 varieties of live animals and poultry, ranging from foxes to wolves, masked weasels, crabs, shrimp, bats, turtles, snakes, rats, porcupines, birds, and many more. There are also live animals such as tiger frogs, snakes, porcupines, and other wildlife

Symptoms of an infected patient can be: colds, coughs, sore throat, headaches and fever. This virus can also cause severe respiratory diseases such as pneumonia, acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and even death. Corona virus or Coronavirus is the name of a group of viruses which, when viewed from a microscope, looks like the Sun corona. This virus is like the SARS virus that appeared in 2002 in China and the MERS virus appeared in Saudi Arabia in 2012.

As we know, before the Corona virus, in 2003-2004 China was once driven by SARS, which was caused by the Chinese habit of eating weasels. It was recorded in Guangdong in November 2002. Likewise, the H5N1 / Bird Flu virus also appeared in China in 1997. It was first detected in geese in China and mutated to humans from infected birds. The Corona Virus, or known by another name 2019-nCoV, according to Scientists also comes from animals. So, this virus, including the zoonotic virus. The extent of the territory of China, the enormous population of China, to the pattern of life and dietary habit (the patterns of eating) are not common, who like raw and unusual food is the origin of this virus outbreak.

Until the beginning of March 2020, around 600 Chinese people have died, while 8,137 people have been infected. Because reports of a surge in deaths that occurred in China are so large, the World Health Organization (WHO)-even announced a global emergency related to the spread of the virus. Panic broke out everywhere. Social change also occurs in the most brutal and forced ways. (Showalter, 1997) shows that hysteria emerges horribly with extraordinary amplitude due to the emergence of very massive social media.

As of March, the Covid-19 virus was detected in 13 countries. Various countries, seriously limiting their citizens to avoid the plague. America, canceled flights serving China, since a man in Chicago contracted the disease from his wife who had traveled to Wuhan. In Italy, thousands of people died and 6,000 tourists were temporarily detained on a cruise ship at the port after two Chinese passengers were isolated for fear they were carrying the virus. Meanwhile Russia said it would close its direct border with China.

In Iran every 10 minutes one person dies due to the Corona virus. The total death in Iran has reached 1,556 out of 20,610 infected. (Agence France-Presse, n.d.) In Italy, in the last 24 hours 627 people died due to Corona, raising the number of deaths in Italy to 4,032 from a total of 47,021 positive people. (No Title, n.d.) Conversely in China, little by little life is normal. For three days in a row there were no additions to the new Covid-19 case in China internally. There were 41 cases of Corona that occurred within 24 hours originating from those returning to travel from outside China. China began to shift the focus of its assistance outside its country.



As we know, in the East Asian context, 80% of the total 8,652 positive cases of Covid-19 that occurred in South Korea originated from only one person, women (61 years old) who showed symptoms of Covid-19 but when asked to see their doctor, instead "chirping" and go to worship to church. So, the Shincheonje church in Daegu city became the center of the virus spreading. The mother in the South Korean city of Daegu came to church to worship. He felt he was doing good, but in fact a mother of them, was creating *madharat* (bad effect) for 6 thousand South Koreans to be disastrous for her country (Syuhada, 2021)

Many people also know, the first two deaths in Malaysia, one of which is the pilgrims who attend the grand gathering (Ijtima Jamaah Tabligh) who have infected 2/3 of the country. In Vietnam, two people received treatment in hospital after the test results showed they had corona. In Indonesia, a citizen from Batam, with the initials R (40) must be isolated because he is suspected of being exposed to the corona virus after returning from Singapore. And flights from China to Batam City were suspended.

### **How the Virus Spread**

The Corona virus can spread through various ways, including: (1). By air: the patient has a cough or sneezing virus near other people; (2). Direct contact: the patient touches or shakes hands with others; (3). Viruses attach to objects: one can hold objects affected by the virus and then hold the nose, mouth, or eyes without washing hands first; (4). Contamination through feces: transmission in this way is rare but feces from patients infected with the virus can also contain the virus.

To be sure, now the world is shocked by the Corona Virus pandemic that has spread and can cause death. The percentage of deaths regarding the corona virus is very high and dangerous because it has begun to roam in various countries. According to various claims that spread, the corona virus is a virus made by the Chinese government which is kept at the military headquarters in Wuhan. The plan, the virus will be spread throughout the world in order to withdraw money from the sale of vaccines.

After the experts conducted an analysis and study, it was suspected that the Corona virus was deliberately made by the Chinese government as a lethal biological weapon. There is an alleged leak of storage at the military headquarters in Wuhan. The question is, why is it only in Wuhan City that the victims fell instantly? This raises a big question mark, so it can be concluded that the Corona virus leak contaminated the air of Wuhan city and which could breathe fall and die instantly.

### **World Health Problems**

Today, the emergence of Coronavirus has become a global health problem, where Corona sufferers (Covid-19) have severe and deadly respiratory infections. Transmission between humans has been explained by an incubation time of 2-10 days, facilitating its spread through droplets, hands or contaminated surfaces. Therefore, it is important for experts to review the literature on all available information about the persistence of the Corona virus in humans and dead animals, including inactivation strategies with biocidal agents used for chemical disinfection in health facilities (Kampf et al., 2020)

Analysis of 22 studies revealed that human coronaviruses such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Middle East Respiratory coronavirus (MERS)

coronavirus or endemic human coronavirus (HCoV) that can survive on the surface of inanimate objects such as metal, glass or plastic (nine) 9) days, but can be efficiently deactivated by a surface disinfection procedure with 62-71% ethanol, 0.5% hydrogen peroxide or 0.1% sodium hypochlorite in 1 minute. Other biocidal substances such as 0.05-0.2% benzalkonium chloride or 0.02% chlorhexidine diglucate are not effective. Because there is no specific therapy available for SARS-CoV-2, early containment and prevention of further spread will be very important to stop the ongoing outbreak and to control the strains of this new infection (Wong & Tam, 2005).

No data were found to describe the frequency of hands contaminated with Coronavirus, or hand loads, after contacting patients or after touching a contaminated surface. WHO recommends that it is better to apply alcohol-based antiseptics for hand decontamination, for example after removing gloves? Two recommended WHO recommendations (based on 80% ethanol or 75% 2-propanol) have been evaluated in suspension tests against SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, and both are described as very effective (Becker & Reusser, 2016)

### **Muslim and Corona Virus in Indonesia**

The first wave of Covid-19 is in Wuhan, China. Then before spreading to all areas, Wuhan did a lockdown. However, it has spread to more than 155 countries from around 200 countries around the world, including Indonesia. Corona wave is referred to as the second wave (second wave). Countries in this second wave immediately acted and which showed symptoms of rapid transmission. These countries lockdown at distribution centers, with the hope that there will not be a third wave in other areas of the country, or even a lockdown for the entire territory of the country. The point is they want to break the chain of transmission. Regarding Indonesia, the Central Government does not think lockdown as a policy of course also with a variety of reasons that are very reasonable and this continues. Ethnocentrism will cause profound hysteria if a government is unable to manage a disaster or epidemic (Bartholomew, 1990)

At first, we thought, at the level of bishops who were very religious, would be encouraged and postpone the program of this prayer. He will come forward and say, "Although we have prepared everything for months, but for the sake of humanity we will postpone this event!" Aren't we religious in order to humanize humans? But I was wrong. The ritual event turned out to be more important than humanity. The teachings of love for fellow human beings that have been touted are only limited to rhetoric on the stand.

It is not surprising that some people are still grumpy and still come to the mosque, because the classmate of the former Commander in Chief, General (ret.) Gatot Nurmantyo, precisely echoed the movement to prosper the mosque and pray together amid the Corona virus outbreak. "There seems to be something wrong ...?? In his native covid-19-China, communists and most of the non-believers flocked to the mosque and learned ablution to attend prayer in congregation," Gatot wrote. But, continued Gatot, in Muslim majority countries are just the opposite, instead they are busy echoing phobias about mosques, as if the mosque is a source of transmission of COVID-19. Then, according to him, are malls, churches, temples, temples, to public



facilities 'safer' than mosques? "There is a kind of challenge to the plague caused by small creatures that are already underestimated (Passerini, 2000)

Ustaz Dr Abdul Somad (UAS) in one of his lectures, said that Corona was a soldier of God, and the Uyghurs were not affected by this virus because they performed ablution. "All sorts of soldiers of God came. There is also this last soldier named Corona. People who are in Uyghur, not affected by this virus. Many people were amazed. What cause? One reason is because they perform ablution. Every day they wash their hands. The virus will not be exposed to people who always maintain purity," said UAS.

Yet we all know that many of our Muslim brothers and sisters in various countries, including the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, and those who like ablution, are victims of the Corona virus malignancy. This is what happens if religious leaders, both clerics and priests, give lectures but without knowledge.

As for his mother, on February 27 he attended a seminar in Jakarta. The next day he had diarrhea and on February 29, he was consulted by a doctor in Jakarta. Then take medicine for 4 days but have not recovered. Control again, ask to be hospitalized, when diagnosed typhoid. Then on March 10, 2020, he was hospitalized. After lab testing and lung X-rays, there is a new infection with a diagnosis of pneumonia. On March 14 the mother was tested, and on March 16 the results came out positive Covid-19. Two days later the mother passed away (Wiboonchutikul et al., 2016)

The incubation period for the virus is 14 days. And if that person carrying the virus (carrier) can look healthy, normal like a healthy person in general. So that healthy people who carry the virus do not transmit it further to others, the government adopted a "social distancing" policy so that we do not gather in crowds, at school, on campus, at cafes, at malls, and including at mosques, because it can be a center of transmission. That is why schools and campuses are closed, workers are encouraged to work at home, and movements outside the home are minimized as little as possible.

Imagine if there is one person who looks healthy but the carrier of the virus (carrier) then he prays at the mosque. Then he transmitted to 10 people in the mosque. Ten people who are infected will not know he is infected until the next two weeks (because it takes 14 days to incubate the virus). These ten people return to their homes, and they will pass it on to their families, to their wives and children, to every colleague in his office. His colleague in the office will bring home to his family, his wife and children, also to everyone he meets from work to his home, at every elevator button he presses, on the door handle he opens, on the KRL pole he holds, etc. That's the chain effect of the spread of the virus earlier. From 1 person, it can spread to 10 people, then to 100 people, then to 1,000 people, and so on.

President Jokowi on television has asked for special handling and formed a National Planning Agency (BPBN) to overcome the Corona outbreak and called on the Indonesian people to be vigilant so as not to be hit by a virus that spreads quickly from human to human, even though the request was too late to arrive.

### **Indonesian Muslim Responses to Corona Pandemic**

In the view of Islam among NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) and Muhammadiyah, there is an opinion that in the Qur'an there is no mention explicitly prohibiting eating bat meat. Even if someone forbids it, then something that is forbidden may be eaten or used during an emergency condition, in the sense that there is no more halal medicine

and if not used, the disease will become worse. The disease will not heal or even result in death.

Imam Syihabuddin said, "What is forbidden to be killed, means haram eaten." While many people use this bat as a remedy for shortness of breath or asthma. But everything changes instantly with the corona virus, a bat that was once called a drug turned into a virus carrier. Certainly, every disaster, disease and so on, is really a reminder of how weak humans are, and how powerful God is. If we look deeper, of course this condition makes us realize that the word of God is true: *"It has been seen damage on land and in the sea due to human deeds (immorality) [1], so that Allah feels to them some of their actions, so that they return (to the right path) [TQS. ar-Rûm / 30: 41]*

In another verse, Allah ﷻ mentions: *"And whatever calamity befalls you it is caused by your own (sin) deeds" [TQS. asy-Syûra / 42: 30]* *"O people, eat halal better than that which is on the earth, and do not follow the steps of Satan; because in fact the devil is your real enemy. Indeed, the devil only tells you to do evil and heinous, and say to Allah what you do not know. [TQS. al-Baqarah / 2: 168-169]* *O you who believe, eat among the good fortune that We give to you and give thanks to Allah, if you really only worship Him' [TQS. al-Baqarah / 2: 172]*

Every Muslim believer, must be sure that everything that comes from Allah and His Messenger, is the best. There is no bargaining in that matter. Personally, the authors feel increasingly convinced that it is true that Islam is a fundamental solution for all our lives. There is no real good, except Islam. Damage is happening like this! Poverty, disobedience, crime, LGBT, floods, earthquakes, including outbreaks of the virus are the work of human hands! As a result of our distance from God's rules. Prefer passion rather than revelation. Prioritize lust, rather than obey! So that alternating calamities are present amid the people.

Applying Islam essentially in all aspects of our lives, is the best capital for a life full of grace from God. If you are still far from the disease, then thank God and ask for protection from Him. In a hadith the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam said: *"Whoever sees an afflicted bala '(illness and bala)', then he prays: Alhamdulillah-ladzii 'aafaanii mimmabtalaaka bihi, wa fadh-dholanii' alaa katsiirin mimman kholaqo tafdhila to him (in the form of disease), and (all praise to him) for exaggerating me over his servants "(HR. At Tirmidzi no. 3431 and was honored by Sheikh Al Albani).*

Whoever reads this prayer, surely, he will be saved from the disaster if he lives. Insha Allah. The rest, of course we can also take various preventive measures such as: *First*, it's best to diligently wash your hands with soap, for about 20 seconds. *Second*, Not having direct contact with patients infected with the corona virus from Wuhan and not traveling to the site of the plague; Wuhan, China at a time like this. In connection with this, the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam said: "If you hear about the plague in a country, then do not enter it. But if there is an outbreak somewhere where you are, then don't leave that place," (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim).

*Third*, avoid animal markets or markets that sell uncooked meat. *Fourth*, take care of your health by using a mask when the weather is not good, keep your diet and drink and rest.

### **WHO and the Muslim World**

The World Health Organization (WHO) established the global pandemic status of Covid-19 after the dangerous virus spread to most regions of the world. The number



of people infected and the death toll continues to grow, while the light of effective treatment has not yet been found. Mass gatherings in large numbers have been stopped to avoid the transmission process such as schools, campuses, entertainment venues, conferences, and include worship activities such as Friday prayers. Iran, Malaysia, and most of the Muslim World have stopped the mosque's prayers.

When the outbreak began in China, there was a lot of public discussion about the opinion of a cleric, Ustaz Abdul Somad MA PhD, who said that Covid-19 was an army of God sent to China for oppressing and slaughtering Uighur Muslims. Controversy also spread, especially on social media and mass media. It becomes a big question when the virus spreads to the Islamic community and eventually causes the cessation of *umrah* (little hajj pilgrimage) activities in Mecca-Medina, the cessation of Friday prayers, and other Muslim worship activities that involve large numbers of masses.

In the Corona (Covid-19) case, there are scholars who accuse the affected areas of the Corona disaster in China, Singapore, the US, Europe, and others for being exposed to the curse of God Almighty (Allah SWT) as happened in the earthquake or tsunami disaster that occurred in Lombok, Palu, Banten and others. Al-Qur'an verses and certain hadiths related to disaster are quoted by fundamentalist Islam scholars in Indonesia as justifying their opinions to judge others who are being struck down by disaster. They do not think what if there is a family or even himself affected by the disaster.

There are two scattered views of the ulama that deserve to be referred to. *First*, which reminds how when the 2nd Caliph Umar bin Khattab responded to the plague of *tha'un amwas* (infectious disease) that struck the territory of Sham at that time. Umar and his entourage who heard the news of the plague before entering the area, confronted the debates of the friends: whether to continue the journey or return to Medina. As the leader of Umar decided not to continue the journey with the reason: we choose one destiny and leave another destiny. This means that human endeavors are important in this matter. In another part, by referring to the Prophet's hadith which was revealed by HR Bukhari who stated: "*If you hear an epidemic in a region, then do not enter it. But, if an outbreak occurs in your place, then don't leave this place. This is in line with modern medical methods known as "quarantine"*".

*Second*, the views of Indonesian scholars in the US namely Imam Shamsi Ali who reminded the importance of taking lessons on various events that occurred, patiently facing it, then looking for wisdom behind all that, while not stopping to continue praying to God Almighty (Allah SWT). In connection with this view of Imam Shamsi Ali, a US sociologist, Dr. Craig Considine quoted the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad so that people could protect themselves amid the plague. Considine reminded the public to keep their respective safety amid the plague as the Prophet Muhammad advised to quarantine themselves when the plague occurred. Craig Considine explained through his Twitter and YouTube broadcast on (3/18/2020), although the recommendation was hundreds of years old, it was still relevant to the current world situation facing the Covid-19 epidemic. Prof. Considine himself is Catholic and is a Professor at Rice University in Houston, USA.

*Third*, the view by the Chairman of Muhammadiyah Professor Haedar Nasir, facing the Corona virus problem this time as we face problems in general, it is necessary to use a rational and spiritual approach by seeking and praying. Thus, the Muslim Ummah not only stops by taking a position as a judge, but as a doctor who





responds and acts to help the victim. And at the same time trying to find a way out that can save humanity, regardless of ethnicity, ethnicity, or religion.

In this connection, Central Board of NU (PB-NU) ulemas and scholars revealed that there was a suggestion from the Prophet Muhammad SAW that the community should avoid the plague in a country or region listed in a hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari. *"When you hear of a plague of leprosy in a country, you should not enter into it, but if it infects a country, while you are in it, then you should not leave the country."* (Narrated by al-Bukhari).

In addition, there is the Prophet Muhammad also said not to mix sick people with healthy people. "Abu Salamah bin Abdurrahman said; I heard Abu Hurairah from the Prophet sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam he said:" *Do not mix the sick with the healthy.* "

The Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) scholars under the leadership of Said Aqil Sirodj expressed the moderate view above as a reasonable response. In this connection, the NU and Muhammadiyah Indonesian scholars also reaffirmed the importance in a few Islamic tertiary institutions, developing a curriculum that integrates religious knowledge and certain areas of expertise like medicine, physics, biology and others. As such, they are able and authoritative to discuss the two areas they study. This will reduce the interpretation gap between the two fields which are increasingly specialized. If they study religion and medicine or physics, then they will become competent scholars talking about health or physics; or conversely, they will become doctors or physicists who are able to explain the phenomenon from a religious perspective. The theology believed by the preachers influences what he conveys.

NU and Muhammadiyah clerics also emphasized that the views of ulemas who surrendered to the "destiny of God" (Jabariyah) were considered negative and doubtful because there was no anticipative action against Covid-19, and that could endanger others. This attitude causes them to ignore the health regulations so that they have the potential to become infected and transmit them to others. Nature runs according to natural law or sunnatullah which can be tested through a process of cause and effect. When we know that a virus is spread through interactions between sufferers and those around them, then preventing the occurrence of a crowd is a precaution that must be taken.

## **Conclusions**

The effort in the form of prayer is part of our efforts as people of faith. In the context of the response of Muslims, according to the rational Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah scholars, God Almighty (Allah SWT) himself does not provide certainty when prayer will be answered. That answer may be instantaneous or in a period of time that we ourselves don't know.

In connection with the Islamic Ummah and Indonesian Muslim scholars, it must be realized that stories about the privileges of certain people who are out of the law of *sunnatullah* (the God's law) such as the Prophet Muhammad who were not exposed to any plague and Ibrahim who was not burned by fire, cannot be used as a measure for the public in the case of Corona (Covid-19) and similar pandemic viruses. Therefore, the Muslim scholars, if their knowledge is limited to the field of religion, should not get out of the realm of competence, namely by inviting people to make Corona events today as a moment to do *muhasabah* (introspection), increase our faith

in God, increase prayer, or things others related to humanity, religion and nationality for the benefit of the Indonesian people.

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