

**COPING WITH PRAYING SUPPORTS:
INDONESIAN MUSLIM RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC****Ruslan**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the prayers of the Indonesian Muslim community at various levels to deal with COVID-19. An analysis of the reasons why prayer is important at every level of society is described here. This study presents three levels of support for the prayers of the Indonesian people in dealing with COVID-19, namely the structural level, cultural level and personal level. Descriptive qualitative method is used in this study which is based on data and information sourced from online news. Data were collected, then processed, and then analyzed using a hermeneutic approach. The findings of this study show that prayer support at every level of society as a spiritual solution in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic is a coping with religious values which is considered more important to support solutions and other ways. Concepts in Islam have taught people about the factors that cause disasters and how to respond to them. Therefore, the Indonesian people view COVID-19 as a disaster and a provision from God. At the same time it is also judged as a consequence of the consequences of human actions. Community prayer support that is carried out collectively has an impact on spiritual strengthening which affects the soul and mentality of the community. Spiritual strengthening is also determined by belief and awareness of one's religious teachings.

Keywords: *Prayers; Coping; Spiritual Support; Pandemic; Indonesian Muslim.*

INTRODUCTION

It is interesting to note that since March 2020 there has been an increase in prayer support as a spiritual solution to the COVID-19 disaster from elements of Indonesian society. Praying is a request to God as part of the human faith response in the face of the COVID-19 disaster. The presence of this disaster turned out to have affected social and religious life globally.¹ Based on the facts shown by Bentzen, prayer support for cases related to COVID-19 is considered very large, previously prayer support for certain cases did not reach the number as large as in 2020.² During the Covid-19 era, people in various regions in Indonesia have prayed together, for example, on the island of Java,^{3,4} the island of Kalimantan,⁵ and the island of Sulawesi.⁶ Bentzen argues that the human tendency to pray is driven by the belief that prayer can prevent humans from life's difficulties.⁷ Public prayer support in dealing with COVID-19 is a global phenomenon during the pandemic era, including in Indonesia.

Studies on prayer support as a spiritual solution in Indonesia during COVID-19 have not been found. However, studies on prayer in general in relation to the treatment of certain diseases have been carried out, especially from the element of the effectiveness of prayer against diseases. The study of prayer can be mapped to three groups. The first is a paper that places prayer on having a healing effect on

¹ Oliwia Kowalczyk et al., "Religion and Faith Perception in a Pandemic of COVID-19," *Journal of religion and health* 59, no. 6 (2020): 2671–2677.

² Jeanet Sinding Bentzen, "In Crisis, We Pray: Religiosity and the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 192 (2021): 541–583.

³ Muhammad Hanif, "Kearifan Lokal Masyarakat Kabupaten Madiun Dalam Menyikapi Pandemi Covid-19," *Jurnal Antropologi: Isu-Isu Sosial Budaya* 23, no. 1 (2021): 27–36.

⁴ M Yusuf and Abd Basyid, "Tradisi 'Mbeleh Wedhus Kendhit' Sebagai Sarana Tolak Balak Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Sosial Budaya* 17, no. 2 (2020): 149–159.

⁵ M Miftah Arief and Noor Azmi, "Dedikasi Ulama Kalimantan Dalam Mengatasi Polemik Pandemi COVID-19," *Nizham Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 01 (2021): 125–136.

⁶ Nastia Nastia, "Bahata Sebagai Kearifan Lokal Dalam Upaya Pencegahan Covid-19 Di Desa Lipu Kabupaten Buton Selatan," *Gorontalo Journal of Government and Political Studies* 3, no. 2 (2020): 1–12.

⁷ Bentzen, "In Crisis, We Pray: Religiosity and the COVID-19 Pandemic."

patients who have chronic illnesses.,⁸,⁹. The second is prayer support which can be therapeutic and compensate for psychological ailments.¹⁰,¹¹,¹² And the third is writing about prayer as a spiritual solution that can be integrated with other treatments.¹³ From these three things, it can be stated that this study, namely the study of prayer support as a spiritual solution to COVID-19, is a new study in Indonesia. This paper is also intended to discuss the reasons that lead to prayer support for dealing with COVID-19 in Indonesia, both at the structural, cultural and personal levels.

The purpose of this paper, apart from complementing the shortcomings of the previous literature, is specifically to show; first, that the support for prayer carried out in Indonesia at various levels in dealing with COVID-19 can strengthen spirituality as a therapy in building the immunity of the people in the pandemic era. Humanity not only needs physical support in the form of medicines and COVID-19 vaccines but also needs mental and mental support. The role of prayer can provide spiritual strengthening which will have a direct impact on the unstable mental and mental condition of humans due to the pandemic disaster. Second, this paper is also intended to provide an analysis of the reasons that make prayer important during COVID-19

⁸ Behrang Kazeminezhad, Asma Tarjoman, and Milad Borji, "Relationship between Praying and Self-Care in Elderly with Heart Failure: A Cross-Sectional Study in West of Iran," *Journal of religion and health* 59, no. 1 (2020): 19–28.

⁹ Shai Nkoana et al., "Cancer Survivorship: Religion in Meaning Making and Coping among a Group of Black Prostate Cancer Patients in South Africa," *Journal of religion and health* 61, no. 2 (2022): 1390–1400.

¹⁰ Neal Krause, Gail Ironson, and Kenneth I Pargament, "Lifetime Trauma, Praying for Others, and C-Reactive Protein," *Biodemography and social biology* 62, no. 3 (2016): 249–261.

¹¹ Ahmet Ozdemir, Emine Kaplan Serin, and Mumin Savas, "The Relationship between the Stress Perceived by the Intensive Care Patient's Relatives with Their Religious Attitudes and Behaviors: Turkey Sample," *Journal of religion and health* 60, no. 2 (2021): 752–763.

¹² Barbara Stöckigt et al., "Experiences and Perceived Effects of Rosary Praying: A Qualitative Study," *Journal of religion and health* 60, no. 6 (2021): 3886–3906.

¹³ Meity Elvina, "Integrative Medicine through Islamic Perspective in Respecting Pandemic COVID-19," *International Journal of Islamic and Complementary Medicine* 1, no. 1 (2020): 43–52.



from various levels of society as spiritual strengthening using a hermeneutic approach. In line with that, three things will be discussed in this paper; (1) prayer support for the Indonesian people facing COVID-19 at the structural level, (2) prayer support for COVID-19 at the cultural level and (3) prayer support for dealing with COVID-19 personally.

This paper is based on the arguments: (a) that prayer support as a spiritual solution to COVID-19 will have a direct impact on the mental and psyche of the Indonesian people in the pandemic era, (b) prayer support, is directly proportional to medical support in efforts to deal with COVID-19 and (c) the integration of prayer into various efforts and strategies of the Indonesian government in dealing with COVID-19 has implications for strengthening community immunity. In this case, prayer can be said as a form of *spiritual healing* that can support the health of the Indonesian people. Prayer support as a form of spiritual strengthening can suppress psychological illness. Intense ritual communication to God through prayer can in turn have implications for the growth of a positive spirit of thought in dealing with all the impacts caused by COVID-19.

a. Spiritual Support in Religious Context

Spirituality is a process of empowering the soul in Islamic teachings based on the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs*. Its presence is in the form of internal purification and external development to curb bad intentions and human habits that can cause soul damage.¹⁴ Spiritual teachings are types of teachings that seek to achieve a higher level of awareness and meaning in life.¹⁵ Spiritual support in the context of religion cannot be ignored in handling the pandemic that is sweeping the world.¹⁶ Religious coping can serve as a protective force and support

¹⁴ A D Mohamad, KHAZRI Osman, and AHMAD IRDHA Mokhtar, "Spirituality in Maqasid for the Empowerment of Human Well-Being," *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 11, no. 10 (2020).

¹⁵ Zahra Nasrollahi et al., "Spirituality and Effective Factors in Education: A Qualitative Study," *Journal of education and health promotion* 9 (2020).

¹⁶ Marcus Renato Castro Ribeiro et al., "The Role of Spirituality in the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Spiritual Hotline Project," *Journal of Public Health* 42, no. 4 (2020): 855–856.



for human well-being in a pandemic era.¹⁷ Religion when collaborated with science and the government in handling major disasters such as COVID-19 is a great force that can bring a healthy and prosperous society.¹⁸ The Chairperson of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) for *Da'wah* and *Ukhuwah*, KH Cholil Nafis also emphasized that the role of religion through prayer is very significant, through his statement that COVID-19 is not enough to be handled by human physical strength alone, but also with spiritual strength, namely praying together.¹⁹ Ignoring the role of prayer will trigger disappointment. Therefore, COVID-19 needs to get attention from all institutions so that they are free from the many social problems caused by the pandemic,²⁰ especially the emergence of stress and public panic.^{21 22}

b. Prayer

Prayer, in relation to COVID-19, is a ritual expression of a person to the Almighty who hopes for deliverance from dangers posed by COVID-19 and all its effects. Bentzen argues, during COVID-19, one's prayer requests have increased, this is due to the ongoing crisis and is dangerous for individuals, groups, or communities.²³ In a pandemic situation like this, Bentzen emphasized that people tend to return to their religion to find a solution for peace in life. In line with that, Oliwia Kowalczyk et al., also said that the presence of the COVID-19 disaster

¹⁷ Victor Counted et al., "Hope and Well-Being in Vulnerable Contexts during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Does Religious Coping Matter?," *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 17, no. 1 (2022): 70–81.

¹⁸ Barry A Hong and Paul J Handal, "Science, Religion, Government, and SARS-CoV-2: A Time for Synergy," *Journal of Religion and Health* 59, no. 5 (2020): 2263–2268.

¹⁹ Muhyiddin, "Istighasah MUI, Ikhtiar Hadapi Pandemi Covid-19 Dengan Doa," *Republika.Co.Id.*, 2021.

²⁰ Hong and Handal, "Science, Religion, Government, and SARS-CoV-2: A Time for Synergy."

²¹ Nicolette V Roman, Thuli G Mthembu, and Mujeeb Hoosen, "Spiritual Care—'A Deeper Immunity'—A Response to Covid-19 Pandemic," *African Journal of primary health care and family medicine* 12, no. 1 (2020): 1–3.

²² Chablullah Wibisono, Isramilda Suryanti, and Cevy Amelia, "Influence Of Spiritual, Economic Resistance, Healthy Behavior Of Free Covid-19 Pandemics Through Immunity In Riau Islands, Indonesia," *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy* 11, no. 12 (2020): 1535–1547.

²³ Bentzen, "In Crisis, We Pray: Religiosity and the COVID-19 Pandemic."



can actually increase one's faith.²⁴ Thus, COVID-19, which is seen as an emergency, from a religious point of view, is not something to worry about at all. *Social distancing*, for example, which is expected by the government to be carried out, turns out to be ineffective if the goal is to limit worship in congregation.²⁵ Functionally, the support of prayer has an influence on the object that is its target. Through a number of studies, it was found that the function of prayer is that prayer support as a spiritual solution will have a direct impact on human mental and spirit.²⁶

c. COVID-19 and its handling in Indonesia.

COVID-19 has become a national disaster since March 2020 in Indonesia. The history of this pandemic began in Wuhan in December 2019. Within a few months, it was declared by the WHO as a global pandemic. At this time, the virus outbreak became a global disaster that had a huge impact, not only on the economic, educational, but also socio-religious sectors.²⁷ COVID-19 is already a disaster that cannot be separated from the vulnerable status that threatens the lives of both individuals and groups. Vulnerable as defined by Morgan is an unstable or unlucky status in a person or group.

In 2000, through the Second Amendment to the 1945 Constitution, health was affirmed as part of human rights. Article 28H paragraph (1) states that: "Everyone has the right to live in physical and spiritual prosperity, to have a place to live, and to have a good and healthy environment and have the right to obtain health services." The inclusion of these provisions into the 1945 Constitution illustrates a remarkable paradigm shift. Health is seen no longer just a personal matter related to luck or the grace of God that has nothing to do with the responsibilities of the state, but rather a legal right which must be guaranteed by the state. The issuance of regulations in the context of

²⁴ Kowalczyk et al., "Religion and Faith Perception in a Pandemic of COVID-19."

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Jill B Hamilton et al., "The Use of Prayer during Life-Threatening Illness: A Connectedness to God, Inner-Self, and Others," *Journal of religion and health* 59, no. 4 (2020): 1687–1701.

²⁷ Kowalczyk et al., "Religion and Faith Perception in a Pandemic of COVID-19."

handling the spread of Covid 19 is an effort to support the existence of Law Number 24 of 2007. This law stipulates that disease outbreaks are one of the non-natural disasters that need to be managed for potential threats. Based on these regulations, the current efforts are: (1) Social Distancing/Physical Distancing policy. (2). Protection for Health Workers as the Frontline Guards (3) Large-Scale Social Restrictions. (4) Government transparency in handling the COVID-19 pandemic. (5) Validity of Examination Result Data.²⁸

METHOD

This research focuses on online information about three elements of Muslim society in Indonesia who support prayer as a spiritual solution. This issue was chosen because apart from the Indonesian people being the communities most affected by the pandemic, they also have a unique diversity of responsibilities in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through prayer support.

This research on prayer support uses primary data collected through online media. The data needed includes online media information regarding the activities of the Indonesian Muslim community responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with prayer activities. This data will be realized at three levels, namely the structural, cultural, and personal levels. Prayer at the structural level refers to online information about joint prayer activities carried out by Indonesian government officials during the pandemic. Prayer at the cultural level means online information on joint prayer activities carried out by the Indonesian Muslim community based on their traditions. Prayer at the personal level is meant for online information on prayer activities carried out by individuals from the Indonesian Muslim community.

The data collection process begins with a desk-review of primary and secondary sources obtained from online media. Primary sources originating from online media were randomly selected containing

²⁸Toar Palilingan, "Aspek Hukum Dalam Penanganan Wabah Covid-19," *Jawapos.Com*, 2020, <https://manadopost.jawapos.com/opini/20/04/2020/aspek-hukum-dalam-dalam-penanganan-wabah-covid-19/>.



information about the required data, such as through online media between Antaranews.com, merdeka.com, mediaindonesia.com, national.tempo.com, liputan6.com, news.detik.com and tribunnews.com.

The data were analyzed following the Huberman stages, namely, data reduction, data display, and data verification. The data that have been classified were then analyzed based on Madison's analysis using a hermeneutic approach. A research approach that is directly related to the interpretation of existing phenomena.²⁹ However, the interpretation of the phenomenon of praying in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia will include views from the perspective of the Koran.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Prayer Support for Indonesian Society at Structural Level in the Pandemic Era

Prayer is a ritual communication with a transcendent partner which is carried out through a request for a specific purpose. Prayer communication to face the pandemic, in practice it is not only done personally but also done together (in congregation). Praying together is phenomenal in Indonesia in responding to the impact of COVID-19. Based on a search of online sources, evidence was found that the support for prayer during COVID-19 in Indonesia at the structural level shows a form of spiritual strengthening for the community to face the COVID-19 disaster. The following is Table 1 which describes government institutions or agencies that participate in supporting prayer together:

Table 1. Prayer at the structural level

No	Institution	The Purpose of Praying
1.	Ministry of Religion	Hopes that Indonesia will be free from COVID-19
2.	Ministry of Transportation	Pandemic can be faced together by asking strength from Allah swt. because of the high jump case of COVID-19

²⁹ Hengki Wijaya, "Ringkasan Dan Ulasan Buku Analisis Data Penelitian Kualitatif (Prof. Burhan Bungin)" (2018).



3.	Kemnaker	Expect pandemic end soon
4.	Kemenparekraf	Expect that the permanent employees have soul optimistic to face pandemic
5.	Kemensos	Expect that a pandemic is not caused concern
6.	The Ministry of Rural, PDTT	ask Allah so that leaders and all Indonesian citizens are given health, safety, and protection from the Covid-19 outbreak.

Based on the table above, joint prayer activities at the structural level were initiated by Indonesian government officials. Although the implementation was online, it did not reduce the shared goal of expecting protection and safety from the impacts caused by COVID-19. There were six government institutions that had conducted joint prayers online, with their respective goals: (1) Ministry of Religion, praying for Indonesia to be free from COVID-19.³⁰ (2) Ministry of Transportation, praying to ask for strength from Allah SWT to face the pandemic together where the number of Covid-19 cases has jumped highly.³¹ (3) The Ministry of Human Resource, praying for the hope that the pandemic would end soon.³² (4) The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, praying for the purpose of keeping employees

³⁰ Egi Adyatma, "Pemerintah Gelar Acara 'Mendoakan Indonesia Bebas Dari Covid-19,'" *Nasional.Tempo.Co*, 2020, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1342124/pemerintah-gelar-acara-mendoakan-indonesia-bebas-dari-covid-19>.

³¹ Adimas Raditrya Fahky, "Pandemi Belum Selesai, Kemenhub Gelar Doa Bersama," 2021, <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/2234526/pandemi-belum-selesai-kemenhub-gelar-doa-bersama>.

³² Pythag Kurniati, "Ritual-Ritual Tolak Bala Usir Corona Di Berbagai Daerah, Bunyikan Canang Hingga Cukur Gundul," *Kompas.Com*, 2020, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2020/04/02/06150051/ritual-ritual-tolak-bala-usir-corona-di-berbagai-daerah-bunyikan-canang>.



optimistic in facing the pandemic .³³ (5) Ministry of Social Affairs , praying that the pandemic would not cause problematic concern.³⁴ (6) Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration, prays that leaders and all Indonesian citizens were given health, safety, and protection from the Covid-19 outbreak.³⁵

Prayer activities at this level as a whole also show that not only professional work relationships take precedence and precedence, but also spiritual emotional relationships. The state institution provides equal support to all extended families of the ministry, including subordinates and their families affected by COVID-19. This spiritual support is based on concern for disasters that have never been imagined before. The prayer event, entitled #Prayfromhome, is proof of the government and state's spiritual support for people affected by COVID-19.³⁶ Six religious representatives were present asking for prayers for the Indonesian people, even for the world globally. Asking for the help of God Almighty to provide protection and strength to face COVID-19. The President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, in his remarks said that on behalf of himself and the government, as well as the country, he conveyed his deepest condolences to all the victims of the pandemic. Jokowi said he was sure that apart from making efforts

³³ Adi Lazuardi, "Sandiaga Ajak Karyawan Kemenparekraf Optimis Hadapi Pandemi," *Antaranews.Com*, 2021, <https://bali.antaranews.com/berita/243954/sandiaga-ajak-karyawan-kemenparekraf-optimis-hadapi-pandemi>.

³⁴ Ahda Bayhaqi, "Kementerian Gelar Doa Bersama Sebagai Ikhtiar Hadapi Pandemi Covid-19," *Merdeka.Com*, 2021, <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/kementerian-gelar-doa-bersama-sebagai-ikhtiar-hadapi-pandemi-covid-19.html>.

³⁵ Alifia Nuralita Rezqiana, "Hadapi Lonjakan Kasus Covid-19, Gus Halim Ajak Warga Desa Doa Bersama," *Kompas.Com*, 2021, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2021/07/03/12193961/hadapi-lonjakan-kasus-covid-19-gus-halim-ajak-warga-desa-doa-bersama>.

³⁶ Bayhaqi, "Kementerian Gelar Doa Bersama Sebagai Ikhtiar Hadapi Pandemi Covid-19." *Merdeka.Com*. <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/doa-bersama-jokowi-sampaikan-duka-kepada-korban-meninggal-akibat-covid-19.html>



with various outward efforts, he was also obliged to make inner efforts.³⁷

Prayer Support at the Cultural Level in the Pandemic Era

Prayer support at the cultural level is prayer support for the community during the pandemic which is shown through the diversity of cultures and traditions in Indonesia in their respective ways, with the aim of bringing the COVID-19 disaster to an end. Based on searches from online sources, information was found that support for prayer during COVID-19 in Indonesia at the cultural level was shown by several regions. The following table shows the culture and traditions of the Indonesian people which are shown through the hope of praying against disasters related to COVID-19:

Table 2. Prayer at the cultural level

No	Tradition Areas	Destination Pray
1	Remembrance and prayer together while walking around the village in North Aceh	As their endeavor in order to avoid outbreaks of dangerous diseases such as COVID-19
2.	The Baritan tradition in Cirebon	As an expression of rejecting mutual agreement against the COVID-19 outbreak in Indonesia,
3.	The <i>pagebluk</i> tradition (burning wood before Maghrib in front of the house) in Purwodadi mutual agreement	As an effort to reject and ask God the Almighty so that we are all protected from disease outbreaks, especially the corona virus and kept away or fenced off from various types of diseases, epidemics (<i>Pagebluk</i>) and other disasters.
4.	<i>Pelwudukan</i> Tradition	As an effort that is believed to be able to repel disease outbreaks.

³⁷ Markus Junianto Sihaloho, "Pray From Home, Jokowi: Kobarkan Terus Optimisme," *Beritasatu.Com*, 2021, <https://www.beritasatu.com/nasional/799039/pray-from-home-jokowi-kobarkan-terus-optimisme>.

Coping with Praying Supports: Indonesian Muslim Response to the Pandemic

5.	The Kedurei ritual of the Rejang Bengkulu tribe.	Pray to God Almighty and to the ancestors that their hometown is under threat from Covid-19.
6.	Yasinan in Soppeng, South Sulawesi	As an effort to ward off reinforcements and prayers tooft the corona outbreak, especially in Soppeng Regency, the

The table above shows that the culture of the Indonesian people in responding to the COVID-19 disaster is manifested in a number of ritual communications to the Almighty with variant traditions of each. respectively. There are six traditions that can be pointed out. First, remembrance and prayer together while walking around the village in North Aceh. The goal is to ask for prayers to avoid the outbreak of the dangerous disease Covid-19.³⁸ Second, the Baritan Tradition in Cirebon as an expression of prayer. The goal is to reject reinforcements against the Covid-19 corona virus outbreak in Indonesia.³⁹ Third, the tradition of pagebluk (burning wood before sunset in front of the house) in Purwodadi.⁴⁰ The goal is as an effort to ward off reinforcements, asking God Almighty so that all humans are protected from disease outbreaks, especially the corona virus and kept away from various types of diseases, epidemics (Pagebluk) and disasters. Fourth, the pelwudukan

³⁸ Amiruddin Abdullah Reubee, "Zikir Keliling Untuk Tolak Virus Korona Di Aceh Utara," *MediaIndonesia.Com*, 2020, <https://mediaindonesia.com/nusantara/299280/zikir-keliling-untuk-tolak-virus-korona-di-aceh-utara>.

³⁹ Panji Prayitno, "Doa Dan Selawat, Cara Warga Tegalubug Cirebon Tangkal Wabah Covid-19," *Liputan6.Com*, 2020, <https://www.liputan6.com/regional/read/4212240/doa-dan-selawat-cara-warga-tegalubug-cirebon-tangkal-wabah-covid-19>.

⁴⁰Enro, C.,*Lakukan Ritual Tolak Balak Usir Wabah (Pagebluk) Corona*. 2021, <https://www.purwodadi-tepus.desa.id/first/artikel/1900-Lakukan-Ritual-Tolak-Balak-Usir-Wabah--Pagebluk--Corona>

tradition which is believed to be able to repel disease outbreaks.⁴¹ Fifth, the Kedurei ritual of the Rejang Bengkulu tribe asks God Almighty and the ancestors that their hometown is under threat from COVID-19.⁴² Sixth, Yasinan in Soppeng, South Sulawesi as an effort to ward off reinforcements and prayers to ward off the corona outbreak, especially in Soppeng Regency.⁴³

All of the forms of cultural support for prayer above, prove that there are various cultural responses of the Indonesian people related to the handling of the COVID-19 outbreak. It seems that the traditions carried out have experienced adaptations and even cultural integration has occurred in the ceremonies. Prayer rituals to keep COVID-19 away from the lives of Indonesian people are carried out, both in the form of prayer, remembrance and salawat to prayers and rituals that are modeled on syncretism. This tradition has the same goal, namely to reject the COVID-19 disaster and all its effects. Cultural support for prayer is generally carried out in groups and is based on the community's belief that behind the calamity there is a transcendental power that is very influential.

The whole evidence above shows that the culture of prayer in Indonesia is still colored by religion and beliefs that grow in society. Religious teachings and beliefs are held and encourage the dimensions of his life, including the strong sense of caring and empathy for others. People from various regions show the same determination or strong intention in dealing with COVID-19. Each salvation tradition represents their optimistic spirit who wants to be free from the dangers that will be caused by the plague through their respective ritual expressions.

⁴¹ Ardian Fanani, "Warga Banyuwangi Coba Usir Wabah Corona Dengan Tradisi Pelkudukan," *News.Detik.Com*, 2021, <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-timur/d-5648234/warga-banyuwangi-coba-usir-wabah-corona-dengan-tradisi-pelkudukan>.

⁴² Pythag Kurniati, "Ritual-Ritual Tolak Bala Usir Corona Di Berbagai Daerah, Bunyikan Canang Hingga Cukur Gundul," *Kompas.Com*, 2020, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2020/04/02/06150051/ritual-ritual-tolak-bala-usir-corona-di-berbagai-daerah-bunyikan-canang?page=all>.

⁴³ Andi Baly, "Daerah Serentak Masjid Di Kabupaten Soppeng Gelar Magrib Yasinan Tolak Bala Serentak Masjid Di Kabupaten Soppeng Gelar Magrib Yasinan Tolak Bala," *Sulsel.Kemenag.Co.Id*, 2021, <https://sulsel.kemenag.go.id/daerah/serentak-masjid-di-kabupaten-soppeng-gelar-magrib-yasinan-tolak-bala-9oDh2>.



Prayer that has become a tradition as a ritual to ask God for human salvation has a spiritual dimension that will support mental and mental resilience.

Indonesian Community Prayer Personally

Support Individual prayer support during COVID-19 has received attention from religious leaders in Indonesia. Six religious figures offered the importance of support through prayers that are worth reading in relation to COVID-19. Religious leaders who provide prayer support can be seen in the following table:

No.	Personal	Prayer
1	Ahmad Luthfi Fathullah	Reading Prophet Yunus' Prayer
2	Adi Hidayat	Reading the remembrance of verses with sincerity: (1) Surah al-Isra verse 82. (2) Surah Al Anbiya verses 83-84 (3) Surah al-Fatihah.
3.	Abdul Somad	<i>Allahumma rabbinnas isyfi antasy-syafi. Allahumma azhibil ba'sa</i> (O Allah, Lord of all mankind, heal our brother who is sick. Ya Allah keep him away from all diseases
4.	KH Agoes Ali Masyhuri	Increase the Prophet's prayers and istighfar based on Surah al-Anfal verse 33.
5.	Buya Yahya	Qunut nazilah at the last fardhu rak'ah prayer after bowing
6	Khalid Basalamah	<i>Allahumma innii a'uudzu bika minal barasi wal junani wal juzami wa min sayyi'il asqaam.</i>

Table above, based on online sources, there are six religious figures who teach prayer in dealing with COVID-19. (1) Ahmad Luthfi Fathullah teaches to read the prayer of the prophet Yunus as stated in surah al-Anbiya' verse 87,⁴⁴ (2) Adi Hidayat teaches to read remembrance or several verses with full sincerity: (a) Surah al-Isra verse

⁴⁴ Kastolani, "Doa Minta Kesembuhan Dari Penyakit Covid-19," *Inews.Id*, 2021, <https://www.inews.id/lifestyle/muslim/doa-minta-kesembuhan-dari-penyakit-covid-19>.

82. (b) Surah Al Anbiya verses 83-84 (c) Surah al-Fatihah,⁴⁵ (3) Abdul Somad teaches to read the prayer *Allahumma rabbinnas isyfi antasy-syafi, azhibil ba'sa* (O Allah, Lord of all mankind, heal us who are sick, You are the Healer. O Allah, keep away from all diseases),⁴⁶ (4) KH Agoes Ali Masyhuri who teaches to multiply the Prophet's prayers and *istighfar* based on Surah al-Anfal verse 33,⁴⁷ (5) Buya Yahya teaches to do Qunut nazilah on every last fardhu prayer after bowing,⁴⁸ (6) Khalid Basalamah who teaches reading *Allahumma innii a'uudzu bika minal barasi wal junani wal juzami wa min sayyi'il asqaam*.⁴⁹

The prayer instructions and reading practices taught and read by the religious leaders above during the COVID-19 era, are a prayer trend to face the pandemic disaster. This is also shown that religion does not ignore human health and safety during a pandemic. Prayers and readings shown by religious leaders are believed to be specifically for a protection of God. These prayers are readings that can be found in the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet. Teaching on prayer to deal with COVID-19 in Indonesia shows that religious leaders have taken part with the government in providing solutions to the community as a form of spiritual strengthening so that their souls and minds are in a controlled and optimistic condition in facing the pandemic situation.

⁴⁵ Adi Hidayat, "Amalan Zikir Dan Doa Saat Menghadapi Covid-19 Menurut Ustaz Adi Hidayat," *Poskota.Co.Id*, 2021, <https://sulsel.poskota.co.id/2021/07/08/amalan-zikir-dan-doa-saat-menghadapi-covid-19-menurut-ustaz-adi-hidayat>.

⁴⁶ Rosmha Widiyani, "Virus Corona Masuk Indonesia, Ustaz Abdul Somad Ajarkan Doa Ini," *Detik.Com*, 2020, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4922247/virus-corona-masuk-indonesia-ustaz-abdul-somad-ajarkan-doa-ini>.

⁴⁷ Mad, "Tausiyah Ulama NU, Padukan Usaha Dan Doa Untuk Selamat Dari Covid-19," *Kominfo.Jatimprov.Co.Id*, 2021, <https://kominfo.jatimprov.go.id/read/umum/tausiyah-ulama-nu-padukan-usaha-dan-doa-untuk-selamat-dari-covid-19>.

⁴⁸ Agus Triharsanto, "Buya Yahya Bagikan Doa Dan Cara Agar Terhindar Dari Wabah Penyakit, Termasuk Virus Corona," 2020, <https://batam.tribunnews.com/2020/03/02/buya-yahya-bagikan-doa-dan-cara-agar-terhindar-dari-wabah-penyakit-termasuk-virus-corona>.

⁴⁹ Panji Baskhara, "Doa Agar Terhindar Dari Wabah Penyakit, Khalid Basalamah: Ya Allah Sungguh Aku Berlindung Kepada Mu," *Tribunnews.Com*, 2021, <https://wartakota.tribunnews.com/2021/07/09/doa-agar-terhindar-dari-wabah-penyakit-khalid-basalamah-ya-allah-sungguh-aku-berlindung-kepada-mu>.



Every prayer and practice in dealing with COVID-19 as taught by religious figures, has the same relationship and purpose. The essence of the purpose of each prayer and other practice is to ask for protection and salvation. In terms of the substance of the meaning of prayer and practice, they both carry the teaching that all calamities that befall humans are the will of God, and humans are required to ask forgiveness for their mistakes. The practice of prayer and reading the verses that are read are part of the verses of the Koran. It is found in surah al-Anbiya' verse 87, surah al-Isra verse 82, surah al-anbiya verse 83-84 and surah al-Fatihah. Apart from this verse, there is also remembrance in the form of salawat to the Prophet and istigfar as taught by KH Agoes Ali Masyhuri, as well as other prayers which are believed to be prayers of protection and safety. All of these teachings of prayer and practice normatively contain spiritual teachings that can support the soul and mentality, especially for those affected by COVID-19.

Based on the results shown in the results section, it can be conveyed that prayer support as a spiritual solution during COVID-19 in Indonesia is mapped into three levels, namely prayer support for the Indonesian people at the structural level, prayer at the cultural level and prayer for the Indonesian people personally. Prayer support at three levels in Indonesian society shows a tendency that the Indonesian people have placed religion and public belief in an important role in finding solutions to social problems related to COVID-19. Religion and community beliefs have taught dimensions of spiritual handling and treatment that can strengthen the spirituality of people affected by the COVID-19 disaster. The Indonesian people, on the one hand, have shown that prayer at any level together has the capacity to support mental and mental conditions. On the other hand, to introduce how prayer efforts can provide a strong inner atmosphere after both having religious awareness and assessing the COVID-19 disaster as God's will that holds wisdom. The presence of the COVID-19 disaster is seen as difficult to overcome if only through human physical strength, but spiritual strength is also needed, said KH Cholil Nafis, Chair of the MUI for Da'wah and Ukhuwah Sector. In line with that, this spiritual teaching,



in principle, is a teaching that seeks to find a higher level of awareness and meaning in life.⁵⁰

Related to the results of the study, it can be concluded that COVID-19, which the Indonesian nation considers a disaster and God's will, is a representation of an understanding that is in line with QS. Al-Hadid/57:22 "No calamity befalls on the earth and on yourself except that it is written in the book ...". On the other hand, it can also be understood that the interpretation of religious figures has placed the emergence of the COVID-19 disaster in relation to human activities. Humans are a factor in the occurrence of the COVID-19 disaster (Surah al-Syuura/42:30). Getting closer to God by praying and asking for forgiveness and safety from the dangers of COVID-19 is important as in QS. Al-Anfal/8:33 which requires humans to do istighfar. Approaching God by asking forgiveness is a form of self-awareness.

The practice of prayer or remembrance for every human being in the COVID-19 era will have implications for strengthening the human soul and mentality. Dhikr and prayer both personally and collectively (in congregation) are able to give birth to peace of mind (Surah Al-Ra'd/13:28) and have an impact on the growth of spiritual strength as a religious solution in dealing with disasters. This can be confirmed by the statement of Hamilton et al. that the support of prayer as a spiritual solution will have direct consequences for the mental and human soul.⁵¹ The emergence of COVID-19 also has implications for increasing the faith of the Indonesian people during the pandemic. Prayer during the pandemic at the structural, cultural, and personal levels have taught the Indonesian generation the importance of the togetherness movement to maintain spiritual values as an effort to find peace, safety, and prosperity in society. The material of the teachings of prayer which is complex and has been taught to be practiced is a medium of endeavor for the safety and well-being of the human soul. Human awareness of their existence and their relationship with God through prayer rituals during COVID-19 will support the growth of spiritual strength.

⁵⁰ Nasrollahi et al., "Spirituality and Effective Factors in Education: A Qualitative Study."

⁵¹ Hamilton et al., "The Use of Prayer during Life-Threatening Illness: A Connectedness to God, Inner-Self, and Others."



If prayer support for dealing with COVID-19 in Indonesia relies on religious teachings and community beliefs, then this strategy can be classified as religious coping. This strategy is more likely to deal with mental health for people who are directly and indirectly affected by COVID-19 through a religious approach, either due to panic, isolation and others.⁵² There are many ways humans can deal with pandemics, one of them is with religious coping, but Karl and Thomas regret it, because government officials around the world are more focused on controlling the pandemic by adopting COVID-19 prevention strategies through medical efforts, while very little attention is paid to handling related with mental health.⁵³

In this regard, it is important to maintain spiritual solutions in Indonesia in handling the COVID-19 disaster. Involving religion as the mainstream is directly proportional to the medical handler and the government. Prayer support at various levels is a reflection of the awareness of the Indonesian nation's religiosity. This awareness of religiosity is able to raise the spirit of life in the midst of a pandemic era and reduce mental turmoil, Saebani calls this attitude of religious awareness with a different term, namely theological awareness.⁵⁴ The government's religious attitude will have an impact on the birth of spiritual strength, an attitude that cannot be ignored during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵⁵ In fact, Hong and experts emphasize the religious dimension, such as prayer, need to be present in collaboration with science and the government to deal with the pandemic. This dimension puts great power that can lead humans to the safety of their souls and human welfare.⁵⁶

⁵² Justin Thomas and Mariapaola Barbato, "Positive Religious Coping and Mental Health among Christians and Muslims in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Religions* 11, no. 10 (2020): 498.

⁵³ Sujita Kumar Kar et al., "Coping with Mental Health Challenges during COVID-19," in *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)* (Springer, 2020), 199–213.

⁵⁴ Beni Ahmad Saebani et al., "Kesadaran Teologis Keberagamaan Umat Manusia Dalam Menghadapi Wabah Covid-19," *Digital Library UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung* (2020).

⁵⁵ Ribeiro et al., "The Role of Spirituality in the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Spiritual Hotline Project."

⁵⁶ Hong and Handal, "Science, Religion, Government, and SARS-CoV-2: A Time for Synergy."



CONCLUSION

It turns out that prayer support at every level as a spiritual solution in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic has a relationship with religious coping that cannot be ignored. Mental and soul strength are highly affected by the beliefs and awareness of religious teachings. Religion teaches many ways to overcome crises and calamities that can strengthen the human soul and mentality. The COVID-19 disaster, which is considered a destiny from God and has a relationship with human actions and actions, has been addressed by the Indonesian people through prayer activities at three levels, namely structural, cultural, and personal. Prayer and remembrance as well as other practices in the face of calamity are soul stimulants that direct the creation of spiritual strength and can form body immunity.

The main strength of this study is regarding praying as the source of strength of Indonesians in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. This study also shows that Indonesian people have a high level of spirituality during the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategy in handling COVID-19 in Indonesia has integrated community prayer support with the government medical programs as an inseparable part.

The results and conclusions of this study still have limitations because the data were collected only from online sources. Future research could use an experimental design to examine the relationship between prayer, mental resilience, and spirituality in the COVID-19 era. A combination of variables that is still rarely found in Indonesia. Henceforth, these variables should be investigated with other related variables. Future research is likely to expand the domain and add new variations to aspects of belief, such as: near-death belief, as a proposed model to increase the impact of spirituality on other variables such as an increased faith.

Since people who have spiritual strength have a higher level of adaptability, the practical and important implication for a prayer support is to strengthen spirituality which can play a protective role and increase mental and mental strength. Current findings suggest that



increasing prayer as a spiritual power can reduce the likelihood of mental and mental illness. Indirectly, it can increase body immunity among Indonesian people in facing the COVID-19 pandemic.

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