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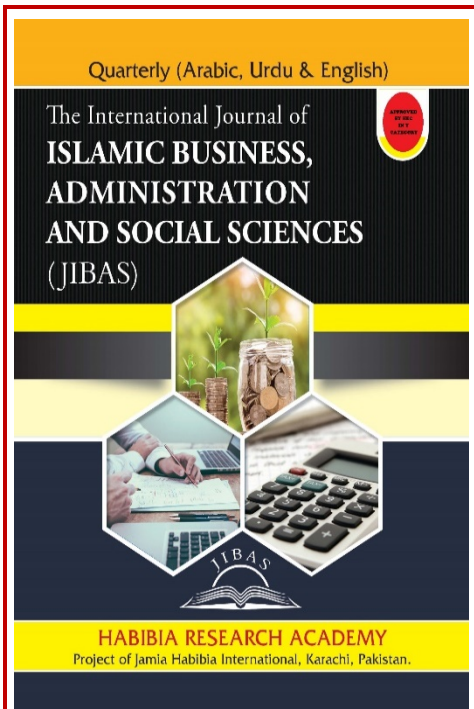
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TOPIC:
THE LINK BETWEEN BATES AND CORONA VIRUS AND THE CONCEPT OF EATING HALAL ANIMALS IN ISLAM

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THE LINK BETWEEN BATES AND CORONA VIRUS AND THE CONCEPT OF EATING HALAL ANIMALS IN ISLAM

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ABSTRACT:

During the last two months, Coronaviruses (CoVs) has turned into a terrifying worldwide pandemic, which started from the Wuhan city of China. Now this virus has reached nearly the sixty countries of the world. More than 80,000 people have been infected in China only and nearly 3,000 have died from this fatal virus. It is an established fact that coronavirus outbreak originated from bats which have been sold with other wild animals in the meat market of Wuhan city. The purpose of this research study is to provide an insight on the Islamic shariah laws regarding the permissibility and impermissibility of animals found on the earth and under the sea. Our study outcomes reveal that shariah laws in this regard impart the best principles, which protect the human lives from coronavirus type outbursts. However, it is far better to acquire preliminary measures than to cure a disease through medications. Being a divine religion, Islamic teachings communicate a complete package of daily routine activities from religious deeds to consuming food. Islam is the only religion which clearly establishes rules about the concept of halal (permissible) and haram (impermissible) food and animals.

KEYWORDS: *Pandemic, Permissibility, shariah, coronavirus, haram, Phylogenetic analysis*

INTRODUCTION: The viral epidemic of the Corona virus has severely affected and terrified the whole world aware human history. The “World Health Organization (WHO)” announced that the virus, named “2019-nCov,” spread to all 210 countries over the world. According to some news reports, especially western media highlighted this point of view, this fatal virus started off from Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. According to world meter of Corona Virus 524 million people have been infected and nearly 62 million peoples have died due to this epidemic form its beginning in 2019. The virus is believed to be originated from the Wuhan meat market of fish and wildlife, although the cause and origin of the virus are not confirmed officially.¹ However, Wuhan is not an existing mega city like Shanghai or Beijing, its population is still 8.9 million, which might have allowed the virus to spread rapidly into the city and in the vicinity of Hubei.

At that time, Wuhan city Mayor Zhu Xianwang told reporters that the city authorities had been intensifying their efforts to provide specialized treatment to a large number of virus-infected patients. Soon after the break out of this deadly disease the Chinese government had imposed a national campaign to sell wild animals. Strict travel restrictions had been imposed in China and abroad to restrain and stop the epidemic condition. As it was a difficult and gigantic task, the health experts briefed the world that this new virus was contagious during the incubation period, when a person could carry the virus without symptoms. It has also anticipated that 2019-nCov might be incubate up to 14 days.²

In the beginning of this pandemic, it was very difficult to control the virus because its symptoms were rarely visible and the infected person could be ignored up to two weeks. So, the Chinese National Committee Minister Ma Xiaoyi predicted that the virus seems to be getting stronger day by day then and at last it seized the whole world literally.³

According to some research reports this virus itself is a new type of corona virus family, which generally affects animals rather than humans. However, humans are mostly affected

from the common cold which is a family member of corona virus. The types of viruses comprises “severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)”, both of which resulted in deaths, especially in 2003 when a major SARS epidemic killed 774 people. It is also important to note that SARS patients were not contagious until symptoms appeared and were unable to spread the virus during the incubation period. This new virus infects the respiratory system with symptoms that begin with a dry cough and fever, and turn into shortness of breath and chest pain. In severe cases, the virus can cause viral pneumonia, kidney failure, and possibly death. As this virus is changing its structure and the world is witnessing new variants of this virus, currently some vaccines are introduced for its treatment but these vaccines still fail to completely eradicate this disease. Some initial vaccines have started to come in the market but their side effects and effectiveness is still questionable.

THE SPREAD OF CORONA VIRUS IN HUMAN HISTROY : Coronavirus was first recognized as a basis of the common cold in 1960. According to a 2001 Canadian research, “more than 500 patients developed flu-like symptoms.” Virological analysis revealed that “3.6% of these cases were positive for HCoV-NL63 strain by polymerase chain reaction (PCR).” Until 2002, MERS was thought to be a comparatively meek, non-lethal virus. Nevertheless, during the 2002-03 outbreak in “Guangdong Province of China,” which fan out to several other states including “Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and the USA,” triggered severe “acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)” and a high death rate was noted in more than 1,000 patients. Subsequent to this occurrence, microbiologists and infectious virus specialists put their focus on understanding the pathogenesis of the disease and revealed that this virus was begun by a different type of the coronavirus. According to research data 8,096 people were become the victim of this novel disease, causing 774 people to death. Hence, in 2004, “the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)” and “the World Health Organization (WHO)” confirmed a state of emergency. According to a report published from Hong Kong, “50 patients contracted SARS, and more than 60% of these patients tested positive for MERS”. The development of this disease shows that the coronavirus is not a steady virus and can adjust itself to turn more contagious and even fatal to humans. In fact, second spread of this virus occurred in Saudi Arabia in 2012 which led to numerous deaths. Afterwards this virus spread to other Arab states in the Middle East and then it targeted to the world, which reintroduced the world attention to this new type of the Corona virus.

The cases of MERS-CoV started to appear in the Arab world and Saudi Arabia on June 13, 2012 and the first patient of MERS-CoV was detected in Saudi capital Jeddah. This spread of virus caused many diseases which especially diagnosed in medical staff who had direct interaction with their patients. It shows that this virus was contagious and can affect from one person to other through flying droplets. This caused into strict precautionary measures such as installation of isolated camps, self-isolation at home and use of safety apparatus such as gloves, N95 masks and gowns. Some extraordinary cases of coronavirus were spotted in all the Saudi provinces, while Jeddah, Mecca, Riyadh and Al-Ahsa were declared officially the worst affected cities. In addition, several hospitals were reported to be the victim of this outbreak which caused the shutdown of these hospitals and not accepting plague-ridden patients. Most of the patients who were died from this virus had been suffering from chronic kidney failure, congestive heart failure, diabetes, or had newly

undergone organ transplants (eg kidney transplants). After the early occurrence in Saudi Arabia, MERS-CoV was reported in numerous other states, including Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, and Tunisia. As per data revealed by Saudi Ministry of Health, “from June 13, 2012 to December 2015, a total of 1,227 cases of novel coronavirus were reported, with 728 recovering, 1 still being treated, and 549 symptomatic deaths associated with Middle East Respiratory Syndrome.” The Ministry of Health, primary health care centers and public health officials instantly started to create awareness in Saudi people via the Internet, conferences and newsletters, and carefully continued to record new cases to develop information and treatment approaches to inactive this virus. The latest WHO study report on December 7, 2015 disclosed that “MERS-COV had been identified in 26 countries, with 1,621 confirmed cases and 584 deaths worldwide.” It is worth noting that the large number of infected cases and deaths were occurred in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

LINK BETWEEN BATS AND CORONAVIRUSES: Bats are included in mammals and they are the only animals which can power-fly. Due to this ability they can migrate to distant places like the land animals. Bats are found in large numbers in all over the world and consist of one-fifth of all mammal species. Genetic analysis classified bats into two main subcategories—the initial group consists of one mega bat and five micro bat families. The subsequent group comprises on thirteen micro bat families .⁴

It is theorized that flight helped a bat to obtain the required pressure which provides it a chance to coexist with viruses, while the travelling capability of bats has specific significance in the background of virus spread.⁵ Certainly, bats has been connected to a few greatly pathogenic human diseases in the past and are associated to this hypothesis. Some of the well categorized bat viruses, comprising “Rabies virus, Nipah virus, Hendra virus, Marburg virus, Ebola virus, and Mengla virus,” carry a great risk to human life.⁶ An inclusive study of mammalian host–virus associations confirmed that bats host a considerably higher amount of zoonotic viruses than other mammalian animals .⁷ Interestingly bats are the host of most of the viruses which belong to different viral families. Therefore, bats are notorious for hosting CoVs and chief reservoir for them. Although civet cats were firstly recognized as the animal species having of SARS-CoV, bats were shortly appeared to be the most likely natural pool having of this disease. Longitudinal observation exposed that “an average 10% SARS-related CoV nucleotide positivity in bats, including some viruses that can use same human entry receptor ACE2 as SARS-CoV.”¹⁰ Likewise, bats are thought to be harboring the progenitor viruses of MERS-CoV, however, dromedary camels have also this capability to directly transfer this disease to humans.¹¹ The fresh SADS-CoV spread was noticed into bats.¹²

According to several research studies on bats, it is summarized that bats carry major 17 out of 29 CoV classes that may infected to humans and cause this virus. At the same time, attributed to the wide range of verities and dissemination of bats, CoVs can be noticed all over the world together with China.¹³

Currently there is no vaccine available to prevent and cure this epidemic which is gradually spreading all over the world. The main thrust of the given study is to establish that Islam provides the safest life style especially in the context of dietary principles. Halal food is the utmost requirement for every Muslim and is the part of every Muslim’s faith to consume clean and hygienic food and animals according to Islamic principles and guidelines.

THE ORIGIN OF THE DIETARY COMMANDMENTS OF THE MUSLIM:

For Muslims, a entire law of life as the religion of "Islam" has been fulfilled. In Islamic teachings a great importance is given on spiritual hygiene and especially halal food laws. For eating or drinking to be permitted as halal, it must be established by Islamic laws provided in the Qur'an and in the hadith of the prophet (saw).

WHAT IS HALAL? : Halal is an Arabic word that means permissible, legitimate, legal, appropriate, and legal. This Qur'anic term is used to define things that are allowed as "halal". In exchange for halal is prohibited (prohibited or banned). Halal and haram is openly stated in the Quran and hadith. On the other hand things that are not clear in character are called "suspicious". The rudimentary doctrines were discovered by the Messenger's sayings (Hadith). Secondary sources of Islamic law used to define the legality of foods not clarified in the Qur'an and hadith are *ijtihad* to resolve the issue either by (1) consent or consensus of opinion, or (2) analogy, inference, or a an agreement of both. *Halal* means permitted and legitimate, while *haram* means forbidden. It is the exact reverse of halal. Mashboub is questionable, either due to the differing ideas of scientists or the existence of unspecified components in a food product. An impure thing is something impure (a halal thing can become impure when polluted) Makruh is a terminology usually related to someone's dislike for a food product or, although not clearly prohibited, some Muslims find it distasteful. The dietary instructions provided to Muslims are also found in the Bible and other sematic religious books. The cause Muslims adhere to these food consuming precepts is to "obey heavenly commandments." The Glorious Quran, Pickthall (1994).

"O ye who believe! Eat of the good things wherewith WE have provided you and render thanks to ALLAH if it is He whom you worship" (Quran 2: 172). Adherers of Islam are ordered to consume what is "Halal-un-Tayyaban" meaning 'permissible, legalized and wholesome'. "O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and healthy on earth...." (Quran 2:168).

HALAL DIETERY STANDARDS: Generally Muslims are allowed to consume any food apart from what is forbidden either by rulings of the Holy Quran or by the Hadith. These instructions of "Shari'ah" (Islamic law) give liberty of selection for people to eat and drink everything they want as long as it is not forbidden in Islam. "He hath forbidden you only carrion, and blood, and swine flesh, and that which hath been immolated to (the name of) any other than Allah..." (Quran 2:173) "Forbidden unto you (for food) are carrion and blood and swine flesh, and that which hath been dedicated unto any other than Allah, and the strangled, and the dead through beating, and the dead through falling from a height, and that which hath been killed by (the goring of) horns, and the devoured of wild beasts saving that which ye make lawful (by the deathstroke) and that which hath been immolated unto idols. And (forbidden is it) that ye swear by the divining arrows. This is an abomination..." (Quran 5: 3)

All types of alcoholic drinks and intoxicants are strictly forbidden in Islam as: "O ye who believe! Strong drink and games of chance, and idols and divining arrows are only an infamy of Satan's handiwork. Leave it aside in order that ye may succeed" (Quran 5: 90). Blood, pork, and dead animal meat or any halal animal sacrificed on the name of demigods are strictly banned in Islam. It is also directed to sacrifice the Halal animals, while the name of God is pronounced at the time of slaughtering. "Eat of that over which the name of Allah hath been mentioned, if ye are believers in His revelations" (Quran 6: 118) "And eat not of that whereon Allah's name hath not been mentioned, for lo! It is abomination. Lo! The

devils do inspire their minions to dispute with you. But if ye obey them, ye will be in truth idolaters” (Quran 6: 121). In the light and hadith, Muslim scholars and theologians have deduced some basic principles the Qur’an and hadith. According to these precepts all types of clean food is allowed excluding the dead animal, blood, pig and all its by-products, animal sacrificed without mentioning the name of Allah or mentioned the name of demigods, carnivores animals, birds with sharp claws, and all types of intoxicants including alcoholic drinks and drugs. Halal dietary commandments deal more generally with four primary issues: allowed and forbidden animals, slaughtering procedures, ban of blood and intoxicants.

ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF HALAL ANIMALS: Islam only prohibits such things, which can damage human’s health and morality both. Sometimes human reason fails to realize the logic behind the divine rulings properly. To recognize the correct Sharia principles, below is described the basic tenet of *halal*(permissible) and *haram* (forbidden) animals:

1. Some animals are explicitly prohibited according to the Quranic text and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him), such as swine, donkey, horse, etc.
2. All the sea creatures are *haram* (forbidden to consume) except the fish and its sub – types. Such fish are also *haram* which dies naturally in the sea without any external cause such as heat, cold, struck with a stone, pushed to the shore by waves etc. As the Qur’an describes: "*Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine.....*" (Al-Ma'idah: 53) The similar ruling regarding (*samak al-tafi*) the dead fish is reported by the Prophet (peace be upon him) from Jabir ibn Abdullah. The messenger (peace be upon him) said: "What the sea throws up and is left by the tide you may eat, but what dies in the sea and floats you must not eat." (Sunan Abu Dawud, no: 3809 & Sunan Ibn Majah)
3. The third precept is that all invertebrate (animals that does not possess vertebral column) such as hornet, fly, spider, beetle, scorpion, ant earthworms leeches etc, are forbidden (*haram*) to consume. The only exception in this category is of locust, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) permitted its consumption. When the Prophet’s companion Ibne Abi Awfa was asked about consuming a locust, he replied: "I participated in six or seven battles along with the Prophet (peace be upon him), and we used to eat locust with him." (Sunan Abu Dawud, no: 3806)
4. The forth principle is that reptiles such as a snake, lizard, chameleon, etc are also considered *haram* in the Islamic sharia. Reptiles are cold-blooded animals which although, have blood in them but it does not flow in their body like warm-blooded animal.
5. The fifth rule is that all categorize of pests are also deemed "*haram.*" The reason behind the impermissibility of all types of reptiles and pests is their nature of
6. All the warm-blood animals, which consume grass and leaves, and do not hunt other animals for food "(i.e. non-predatory terrestrial animals)", are deemed "*halal*, such as a camel, cow, goat, buffalo, sheep, deer, etc." However, donkey meat is not considered in this general law and its meat is declared "*haram*" for consuming food. As the Qur’an describes:
 "And the cattle, He has created them for you; in them you derive warmth (warm clothing), and numerous benefits, and of them you eat." (Al-Nahl: 5)
 And: "It is Allah Who made cattle for you, that you may use some for riding and some for food." (Al-Mu'min: 79)

According to famous Arabic dictionary al-mujid, the word "al-an'am" refers to non-predatory animals. As the taking of horse-meat as food is related, the renown theologian, "Imam *Abu Hanifa*, disqualifies it in the category of *halal* meat but lesser *haram* (makruh) due to its need in Jihad as a tool and honor." Some other theologians like Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad deem horse-meat *halal*. Thus, "it would be permitted to consume it but better to avoid." As far as the meat of donkey and mule is concerned, the Qur'an does not reveal any clear ruling about them. However, they are the beasts of burden and bred for beauty. The God says: "And (He has created) horses, mules, and donkeys, for you to ride and as an adornment. And He has created (other) things of which you have no knowledge." (Al-Nahl : 8) Noticeably, the Qur'an mentions that all non-predatory animals are allowed to consume for food, as it is mentioned in the earlier verses. However, donkeys and mules are used for transportation and decoration purpose. If their meat was *halal* (permitted), the Islamic teachings would surely have stated it.

In addition, Abdullah bin Umar narrates that "the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade the meat of donkeys on the day of the battle of Khaybar." (Bukhari, No: 5202)

"Abu Tha'laba" reports that "the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited the eating of donkey's meat." (Bukhari, No : 5205)

Anas ibne Malik says that a person came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: "The donkeys have been (slaughtered and) eaten." Another man came and said: "The donkeys have been destroyed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered a person to announce to the people: Allah and His Messenger forbid you to eat donkey's meat for it is impure. Thus the pots were turned upside down while the (donkey's) meat was boiling in them." (Bukhari, No: 5208)

7. The seventh ruling is that all land-dwelling hunting animals and beasts, i.e. animals that hunt with their teeth, are thought to be "*haram*," such as a lion, cheetah, tiger, leopard, wolf, fox, dog, cat, etc.

8. The eighth ruling is that all predatory birds, i.e. those that prey with their claws/talons, are regarded as "*haram*," such as a falcon, eagle, kite, hawk, bat, etc. Abdullah ibne Abbas says that "the Prophet (peace be upon him) made illegal the eating of all fanged beasts of prey, and all the birds having talons." (Muslim, No: 1934) Hence, all the beasts which hunt with their teeth and the birds, prey with their talons/claws, are without any exception stated as "*haram*." In other words the birds, which naturally do not hunt with their claws, rather eat grains and crop, are all believed to be "*halal*," such as a chicken, duck, pigeon, dove, sparrow, crow, etc.

"Abu Musa al-Ash'ari" says: "I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) consuming chicken meat)." (Bukhari, No: 5198)

9. The tenth ruling is that in case a *halal* animal eats filths and stink hangs in its meat and milk, then it will be deemed as (Makruh) lesser *haram* to use its meat and milk. Nevertheless, if it does not create bad smell in the animal's meat and milk, then it will be *halal* to make use of its meat and milk. (Radd al-Muhtar, 6/340)

It should be noted that the above-mentioned rules related to the concept of *halal* must be coupled with the separate rules regarding the correct slaughtering and hunting of these animals. Failure to observe these principles may reduce a "*halal*" animal to "*haram*" for consumption.

SCIENCES BEHIND THE CONSUMPTION OF HALAL FOOD AND ANIMALS

The objective of the Sharia laws is not only to safeguard the humans' health but to preserve the spiritual and physical afflictions. There has always existed a tendency to interpret the prohibited foods in a rational and medical way. "Al-Marghinani," in his *al-Hidayah*, points out that "the aim of the prohibition is to preserve the nobility of the human body by preventing its being disgraced through engaging in prohibited food." (Al-Marghinani, 1991, 4: 68). This trend has advanced mainly in modern periods, after the jurists and medical experts have permitted that some things are forbidden for they are damaging to humans. Contrary to it, those things are permissible by Islamic law for they are good (*tayyib*) human health. Allah (s.a.w) says: O you who believe! Forbid not (yourselves) the good things which Allah hath made lawful for you and transgress not. Surely Allah loveth not the transgressors. (Al-Ma'idah:87).

O you who believe! Eat of the good things wherewith We have supplied you, and render thanks to Allah if you are (indeed) His worshippers. (Al-Baqarah: 172).

It would be interesting to clarify that the word "*al-tayyibat*," which is derived from "*taba*," means good, pleasant, delightful, delicious, sweet, pure and clean. (Al-Ghazali, n.d, 2: 655 and 820; Ibn Manzur, n.d , 4: 2731-4; Toshihito Izutsu, 1966, 235.). "Impure or unclean things should therefore not be eaten. In Islamic medical law context, *al-tayyibat* things are not only good, pleasant, delightful, delicious or sweet but also healthy and beneficent to our body, and what is good for our body is also good for our mind and spirit. As noted earlier that the effects of consuming the prohibited foods and drinks are not only being injurious to one's physical health but also affect the character and spiritual faculties of man. It may also be kept in mind that the consumption of prohibited food is amongst the chief causes, which lead a man to corrupt deeds. Control over food enables man to promote virtues." Al-Ghazali (d. 504/1111) says that "the Creator asks all the creatures to follow His command and eat what is pure, clean, wholesome, nourishing and pleasing to the taste. All these qualities are beautifully summed up in the word '*Tayyib*'." (Al-Ghazali, n.d, 2: 654-5 and 660; al-Shafi'i, n.d, 2: 244-5).

It is important to note that Islamic law prohibits those things that are excessive and can be dispensed with, while suggesting better substitutes and bringing greater peace of mind and comfort to humans. In this perspective, many Muslim scholars state that God Almighty has forbidden intoxicants to enjoy other tasty and healthy drinks for the body and mind. He has banned unclean foods, but introduced healthy alternative foods.

From the above-mentioned facts, we can predict that in order to secure human health and accomplish the aims of Islamic law, it is essential to understand the concept of lawful and forbidden food according to Shariah. The primary goal is to guide man to the right path and give him happiness. Accordingly, the prohibition of intoxicating (alcoholic) food and drinks and everything leading to them, as they are prohibited by Almighty God, is for the well-being of man, that is, the safety of human health, including the mind and body of the individual and society, as to protect them from diseases and the costs of the absence of reason. As far as the effects of the use of prohibited items are concerned, they may be destructive to the human body, human judgment, human self-development, or a combination of both.¹⁴

There is no doubt that everything that is prohibited or declared detestable is risky to human health according to Islamic law, and there is nothing beneficial to health that is not legally

declared and permitted in Islamic law (*shari'ah*). Based on this fact, Al-Qaradawi underlines: "A general rule of the Islamic *shari'ah* is that it is *haram* for the Muslim to eat or drink anything which may cause his death, either quickly or gradually, such as poison, or substances which are injurious to health or harmful to his body. It is also *haram* to eat or drink large quantities of a substance if large quantities of it cause illness. For the Muslim is not entirely his own master; he is also an asset to his religion and his *ummah*, and his life, health, wealth, and all that Allah has bestowed upon him are a trust with him which he is not permitted to diminish."¹⁵

CONCLUSION: The Islamic dietary laws help in protecting humans' health from hazardous consequences. As the current epidemic outburst of 2019-nCov virus has put the human life into an unprecedented danger all over the world, absence of any antidote against this disease has worsened the situation severely. The only defense available against this infection is safety measures and precautions. In the context of corona virus spread which started from consuming bats and wild animals in Chin's city Wuhan, the Islamic concept of consuming *halal* animals proves to be the only way to protect human life from Corona type infections. In current scenario where SARS and MERS family Corona viruses have develop a tendency to transmit from animals to humans, Islamic dietary standards must be observe strictly to secure human lives. In this article these rules and principles are described in detail to minimize the risk factors which are lying around us and we become the victim of them in our ignorance to these divine guidelines.

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