

## THE SEMANTIC APPROACH TO THE WORD *MARĀD* (ILLNESS) IN THE QURAN

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### *Abstract*

The term "*marād*" in the Quran (disease, illness, in English) encompasses a far broader and more complex spectrum of meanings compared to the general understanding within society. Semantic analysis reveals that after the revelation of the Quran, the meaning of this term expanded significantly. Prior to the Quranic revelation, "*marād*" had only one relational meaning. However, post-revelation, its meaning broadened to encompass seven relational concepts: definition, urgency, method, time, subject, cause, and consequence. The method employed in this article is qualitative analysis using the semantic theory developed by Toshihiko Izutsu, which examines key terms within a language to understand the worldview or *Weltanschauung* of the community that uses the language as a tool for communication.

**Keywords** : *marād*, illness, semantic, Quran

### 1. Introduction

The word "*marād*," or disease, in the context of the Quran holds significant relevance in the Islamic perspective on health and human condition. The Quran contains various references to disease, encompassing both physical and spiritual aspects. Through a semantic study of the term "disease," it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the related meanings and concepts can be uncovered, as well as how disease was perceived in religious and social contexts of that time. This analysis is expected to offer new insights into how the Quran provides guidance on physical and spiritual health and its relevance in addressing the health challenges faced by modern society.

One of the advantages of using semantics to understand the verses of the Quran is its ability to examine the meanings of words based on specific linguistic, temporal, and situational contexts. This approach focuses more on a comprehensive analysis of particular words and can identify the relationships between them. This differs from traditional interpretation methods, which tend to reveal the meaning of the Quran as a whole. Semantics not only addresses meaning but also includes the origins of meaning, such as the history of the word, how it has evolved, and the reasons for changes in its meaning over time (Fatimah Djadjasudarma, 1999). From this, we can understand that semantics does not merely assess the meaning of a word from a superficial pragmatic perspective but also traces its history, its development in meaning, and the reasons behind such changes. (Beirade et al., 2019)

The semantic theory developed by Toshihiko Izutsu aims to analyze the Quran independently of any ideological influence, as he was an external observer. Through a semantic approach, Izutsu studied key terms in a language to uncover the worldview or

Weltanschauung of the society that uses that language. This approach encompasses not only ways of thinking and speaking but also the paradigms and methods by which that society interprets the world around them (Izutsu, 1966)(Nabilah Nuraini, 2018)The semantic analysis of the word " *marād* " in the Quran is conducted by first identifying its basic meaning, which is the meaning that consistently accompanies and is retained wherever the word is used. Next, the relational meaning is sought, which refers to the meaning that is always associated and linked with the word " *marād*." Once the basic and relational meanings are understood, the next step is to determine the Quran's intention (Weltanschauung) by connecting this key term with relevant verses (Nuraini, 2020.)

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, heart disease is a form of inner corruption that results in the heart's inability to perceive the truth. This condition leads a person with a diseased heart to love falsehood and hate the truth. Therefore, heart disease is often equated with doubt or uncertainty (shakk or rayb). A person who is doubtful and hesitant about something will feel inner pain until they attain certainty about what they doubt. Heart disease can manifest as anger, doubt, ignorance, and injustice (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2001).

There are several definitions of spiritual disease provided by scholars, one of which is by Dr. Hamzah Ya'cub in his book *The Levels of Tranquility and Happiness of the Believer*. He categorizes spiritual diseases into three types:

1. Spiritual disease is a negative human trait that drives a person to commit evil.
2. Spiritual disease is a destructive and harmful mental attitude.
3. Ignorance and doubt regarding the truth of Islamic teachings (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2001).

Physical illness is sometimes a consequence of one's own actions, such as violations of health norms, daily lifestyle choices, or injustices against the body, leading to the inevitable onset of disease. This also includes heart diseases caused by following desires, inclining toward doubts, and rejecting the truth. Due to this, the heart will be afflicted by two diseases that lead it away from health and balance: the disease of false doubt (shubhat) and the disease of destructive desire (shahwat). The disease of shubhat includes disbelief, hypocrisy, doubt, and innovation, while the various forms of the disease of shahwat include fornication, the love of indecency, and disobedience, as Allah says, "...then the desire of those with a disease in their hearts was aroused" (QS Al-Ahzab: 32), referring to the desire for fornication (Abdurrahman bin Nashir As-Sa'di, 2002).

## 2. Method

The research method in this study employs a qualitative approach rooted in Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic theory, emphasizing the exploration of the dynamic relationships between key terms within the Quranic text. By examining the occurrences of the term "مرض" (disease) in various grammatical forms, the study not only analyzes its lexical meaning but also its broader relational meanings, particularly in relation to spiritual and physical health as depicted in the Quran. Through this semantic analysis, the research aims to uncover the Quranic conceptualization of disease, drawing on both traditional exegesis and linguistic insights to offer a nuanced understanding that aligns with Izutsu's approach to semantic fields in Quranic studies. (Altohami & Khafaga, 2023)

### 3. Results and Discussion

The term "مرض" (disease) appears 19 times in the Quran, distributed across 18 verses and 12 surahs. It is categorized into three forms of dhamir (pronouns). The details are presented in the following table:

NO	Form	Dhamir	Surah	Verse	the place of revelation of the surah
1	مَرَضْتُ	Fi'il Mādi	Asy-Syuaro	80	Mekkah
2	مَرَضَى	Fā'il	At-Taubah	91	Madinah
3			Al-Maidah	6	Madinah
4			An-Nisa	43	Madinah
5			An-Nisa	102	Madinah
6			Al-Muzammil	20	Mekkah
7	مَرَضٌ	Maf'ul	Muhammad	29	Madinah
8			Albaqarah	10	Madinah
9			Albaqarah	10	Madinah
10			At-Taubah	125	Madinah
11			Al-Ahzab	12	Madinah
12			An-Nuur	50	Madinah
13			Al-Hajj	53	Madinah
14			Al-Anfal	49	Madinah
15			Al-Ahzab	32	Madinah
16			Al-Ahzab	60	Madinah
17			Al-Maidah	52	Madinah
18			Muhammad	20	Madinah
19			Al-Mudatsir	31	Mekkah

In the Quran, the word "مرض" (*marād*) appears 19 times in various grammatical forms. The first instance is in the form of a past tense verb "مَرَضْتُ" (*maridtu*), occurring once in Surah Ash-Shu'ara, verse 80. The second form is as a noun, "مَرَضَى" (*marda*), appearing five times in Surah At-Taubah verse 91, Surah Al-Maidah verse 6, Surah An-Nisa verses 43 and 102, and Surah Al-Muzzammil verse 20. Lastly, the word appears in the accusative form

"مَرَضٌ" (*marād*), which occurs 12 times throughout the Quran, including in Surah Muhammad verse 29, twice in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 10, Surah At-Tawbah verse 125, Surah Al-Ahzab verse 12, Surah An-Nur verse 50, Surah Al-Hajj verse 53, Surah Al-Anfal verse 49, Surah Al-Ahzab verses 32 and 60, Surah Al-Maidah verse 52, Surah Muhammad verse 20, and Surah Al-Muddathir verse 31 (Rāghib al-Ishfahānī, n.d.).

The form "مرض" as a past tense verb appears in Surah Ash-Shu'ara, verse 80:

وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَبِهِوَ يَشْفِينِ

"And when I am ill, it is He who cures me" (Ash-Shu'ara: 80).

Imam Jamaluddin al-Qasimi, in his tafsir Mahasinu Ta'wil, explains that this verse reflects the humility of a servant of Allah toward their Creator. According to Ibn Kathir, Rahimahullah, if Allah decrees someone to be ill, He is also the one who decrees their recovery, and no one else can cure them except through the means He has ordained (Qurthubi, 2007).

### 3.1. Basic Meaning

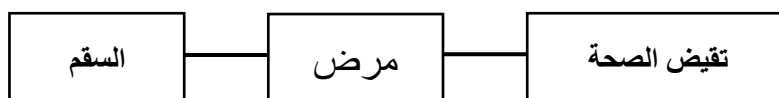
The word "marād" derives from the Arabic root "مَرَضَ يَمْرُضُ مَرَضًا," which means "to be ill" or "to feel unwell." The word "مَرَضٌ" is the verbal noun (Ism Masdar) of the verb "مَرَضَ - يَمْرُضُ," meaning "disease" (Dr. Muhammad Fuad Abdul Baqi, 1997). According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), "sakit" means "to feel discomfort in the body or part of the body due to some ailment," and the body is no longer in a normal, healthy condition. The term "disease" broadly refers to any condition that disrupts the normal functioning of the body. For this reason, disease is associated with the dysfunction of the body's normal homeostasis processes, leading to pain.

According to Ibn Mandhur in his work Lisan al-Arab, the word for disease is understood as "تقيض الصحة," meaning "poor health," and "السقم," which is synonymous with disease (Ibn Mandzur, 1989). Raghīb al-Isfahani, in his book Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran, mentions that diseases are divided into two types. The first is physical illness, which includes all types of diseases that afflict the human body, whether externally visible or internally within organs that are not visible to the naked eye but whose symptoms can be felt, as mentioned in Surah At-Tawbah verse 91. The second type is the diseases of the soul (spiritual illnesses) in humans, such as ignorance, miserliness, hypocrisy, and other heart diseases, as depicted in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 10 (Rāghib al-Ishfahānī, n.d.).

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۗ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ - ١٠

"In their hearts is a disease, so Allah has increased their disease; and for them is a painful punishment because they [habitually] used to lie." (Q.S. Al-Baqarah:10)

Based on research from several dictionaries such as Lisan al-Arab, Mu'jam Maqayis Lughah, Mu'jam Mufradat Fi Gharib al-Quran, and other sources, it can be concluded that the word "taubat" (repentance) has a schema of meanings:



Ibn Mandzur, in his dictionary *Lisan al-Arab*, defines the word "مرض" (*marād*) as "السقم", a synonym for " *marād*" itself. In the Quran, the word "السقم" appears twice, in Surah As-Saffat verses 89 and 145. However, when viewed from the context of the word "السقم", in these two verses, it refers to physical illness, as can be seen from the translation of Surah As-Saffat verse 89, "Then he (Ibrahim) said, 'Indeed, I am [about to be] ill,'" and the translation of Surah As-Saffat verse 145, "Then We cast him (Yunus) onto the open shore while he was ill."

### 3.2. Relational Meaning

Relational meaning refers to the connotative meaning added to the basic meaning of a word by placing it in a specific context within a particular field (Alshammeri et al., 2021). In this context, the relational meaning of the word " *marād*" includes its semantic relationships with other surrounding words. For efficiency and comprehensive coverage of relational meanings, the author will outline the relational meaning of the word "taubat" using the 5W + 1H elements (what, who, when, where, why, and how) explained as follows:

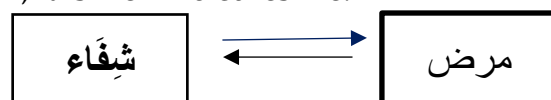
#### 3.1. Relational Meaning Related to Definition (What)

According to Abdul Chaer, semantic relationships can involve words, phrases, or sentences that can express synonymy, antonymy, polysemy, hyponymy, and homophony (Chaer, 1997) The author will explain the meaning of "MARA>D" using the theory of relational meaning, specifically antonymy. The antonym of "taubat" based on relationality is the word "شفاء" (healing), which appears six times in the Quran: Surah At-Tawbah verse 14, Surah Yunus verse 57, Surah An-Nahl verse 69, Surah Al-Isra verse 82, Surah Ash-Shu'ara verse 80, and Surah Fussilat verse 44.

In Surah Ash-Shu'ara verse 80, the words for disease and its remedy are mentioned together in one verse:

وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَبُهِتَ اللَّهُ

"And when I am ill, it is He who cures me."



#### 3.2. Relational Meaning Related to Object (Which)

After further examination, it is unique that all occurrences of the word "مَرَضٌ" (*marād*) in the Quran are always accompanied by the word "قُلُوبٌ" (hearts). The form "مَرَضٌ" (*marād*) in the accusative form is "Isim Masdar." Isim Masdar is a noun that indicates an action or event not associated with a specific time and does not include all the letters of its verb. The word "مَرَضٌ" (*marād*) is an Isim Masdar with the pattern "fa'alun" (فَعْلٌ), derived from the verb with the pattern "فَعِلٌ" (fa'ila), specifically the past tense verb "مَرَضَ" (maradha) and the present tense verb "يَمْرَضُ" (yamradhu).

From the above explanation, it can be understood that the word " *marād*" in its Isim Masdar form refers to spiritual disease. In contrast, the word " *marād*" in its past tense verb form in Surah Ash-Shu'ara verse 80 refers to physical illness.

وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَبِهِ يَشْفِينِ (And when I am ill, it is He who cures me). According to Quraish Shihab in his work Tafsir Al-Misbah, this verse contains the essence of trust and effort when we are ill, as ultimately, it is Allah who cures our sickness, whether through medicine, doctors, or other intermediaries (Quthb, 2003).

### 3.3. Relational Meaning Related to Subject (Who)

The word "مرض" in its noun form "مَرْضَى" (*marda*) appears five times in the Quran: in Surah At-Tawbah verse 91, Surah Al-Maidah verse 6, Surah An-Nisa verses 43 and 102, and Surah Al-Muzzammil verse 20. The noun form implies the doer (the one who acts),

and in the context of the word "مرض," the noun form refers to a sick person.

N C	Surah	Display surah	meanings	essence
1	At-Tauba h ayat 91	لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ - ٩١.. وَرَسُولِهِ	There is no sin (for not participating in battle) upon those who are weak, those who are ill, and those who do not possess anything to spend, as long as they remain sincere to Allah and His Messenger.	The exemption ( <i>rukhsah</i> ) from jihad for those who are ill.
2	an-nisa ayat 43	..وَأِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَى أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا ...	"...And if you are ill or on a journey, or have just relieved yourselves, or have touched women, and you do not find water, then perform tayammum with clean earth.."	The concession ( <i>rukhsah</i> ) for performing tayammum (dry ablution) for those who are ill.
3	Al-Maida h ayat 6	على...وَأِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَى أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا ٦.....	"...And if you are ill or on a journey, or have just relieved yourselves, or have touched women, and you do not find water, then perform tayammum with pure earth..."	The dispensation for performing tayammum (dry ablution) for

				those who are ill.
4	Al-Muza mmil ayat 20	<p>..عَلِمَ أَنْ سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ ۖ وَآخَرُونَ يَضْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَبْتَغُونَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَآخَرُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۖ فَاقْرَأُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ ۚ -....</p>	"...He knows that among you are those who are ill, others traveling through the land seeking some of Allah's bounty, and others fighting in the way of Allah. So, recite what is easy (for you) from the Quran..."	The flexibility in choosing the time for night prayers (Tahajjud) for those who are ill.
5	An-Nisa ayat 102	<p>...وَدَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ تَغْفُلُونَ عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَيْلَةً وَاحِدَةً ۗ وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ كَانَ بِكُمْ أَدَىٰ مِنْ مَطَرٍ أَوْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ أَنْ تَصْعَقُوا ۗ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ</p>	"...The disbelievers wish that you would neglect your weapons and belongings so they could launch a sudden attack on you. But there is no blame on you if you lay down your arms when you are troubled by rain or illness. However, remain on guard..."	rukhsah for shalat khauf.

Interestingly, all forms of the word "مرض" (*marād*) in its active participle (fa'il) form in the Quran relate to exemptions (rukhsah) granted to those who are ill. These exemptions include the permission to perform tayammum for those whose illness would be exacerbated by water, as mentioned twice in the Quran. There is also the rukhsah of performing the prayer of fear (salat khauf) for those who are ill during battle or in the midst of warfare, the allowance for the sick to abstain from participating in battle, and the permission to choose a specific time during the last third of the night for prayer. This is significant because it demonstrates Allah's profound understanding of the conditions of His servants and His provision of ease in worship under such circumstances (Qurthubi, 2007).

### 3.4. Relational Meaning Related to Cause (Why)

According to Raghīb al-Asfahani in his work *Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*, disease is divided into two types. The first type is physical illness, which refers to any disease that afflicts the human body, whether it is visible externally or affects internal organs that are not apparent to the naked eye but manifest through symptoms. This is exemplified in the Quran in Surah At-Tawbah (9:91). The second type is spiritual illness, such as ignorance, miserliness, hypocrisy, and other diseases of the heart, as depicted in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:10) (Rāghīb al-Ishfahānī, n.d.).

## 4. Conclusion: The Concept of Disease in the Quran

The word "مرض" (*marād*), according to the Arabic language as defined in the *Lisan al-Arab* dictionary, is understood as "تفويض الصحة" (a state of poor health) and "السقم" (a synonym for illness) (Ibn Manzur, 1989). In the context of Arabic vocabulary, this term initially referred

only to various types of physical ailments. Research into historical texts reveals that pre-Islamic Arabs (before the revelation of the Quran) in their poetry often faced disease with fear, seeing it as a step closer to death. Some even regarded illness as a form of divine punishment or curse.

However, with the revelation of the Quran, the term "مرض" (*marād*) was broadened to encompass a wider scope, not only referring to physical diseases but also to various forms of spiritual illnesses. Raghīb al-Asfahani, in *Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*, identifies two types of illness: the first being physical diseases affecting the body, either visible or internal, and the second being spiritual diseases affecting the soul, such as ignorance, miserliness, hypocrisy, and other diseases of the heart. These are illustrated in Surah At-Tawbah (9:91) and Surah Al-Baqarah (2:10). Human beings, composed of both soul and body, are susceptible to both physical and spiritual diseases.

In the Quran, the word "مرض" (*marād*) appears in three grammatical forms: past verb (*fi'il madhi*), object (*maf'ul*), and active participle (*fa'il*). The first instance is the word "مرض" in its past verb form, "مَرَضْتُ", found in Surah Ash-Shu'ara (26:80), which indicates a physical illness. The second instance is the word "مرض" in its active participle form, "مَرَضِي", which appears five times and pertains to exemptions for the sick, such as permission to perform tayammum, the prayer of fear during battle, exemption from participating in battle, and choosing a specific time during the last third of the night for prayer.

Finally, the word "marād" (*marad*) in its verbal noun (*isim masdar*) form, "مَرَضٌ", is always paired with the word "قُلُوب" (hearts) in the Quran, indicating that the object of disease is not limited to the physical realm but extends to the spiritual, specifically the heart. Furthermore, the Quran outlines the causes of these diseases, including violations of health norms and transgressions against religious law, such as the pursuit of base desires.

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