

## OF MODERN MEDICINES, JINNS AND BISCUITS

Since the beginning of 2015, I was lying on my back unable to move my legs even an inch, day after day, night after night, all the time in some kind of pain, the difference being more or less. I counted that at worst, there were as many as nine places giving different kinds of pains and discomfort. The least was the numbness of my legs and hands.

During the day, at least I could be more easily heard and attended to, meaning, at least there is someone to lift and bend my legs to reduce the numbness and undo the cramps due to lying static on my back for a long time. Three or four times a day, my wife and my maid would help to make me stand using the walking frame and steer me to sit on the wheelchair while pressing my knees to prevent me from collapsing. Once seated, they pushed me to my computer table where I would sit and work for about one and a half hours at a time, and then, following the same procedure, back to my bed.

So, since, during the day, I am not on my back all the time and since I am more occupied and there is someone around, I seem to suffer less pain.

It is different at night. All kinds of pain seem to come as night falls and continue until about midnight, when, may be through exhaustion, I would fall asleep, but waking up occasionally to urinate or due to *lengoh* because I had been lying static while sleeping. I would wake my wife up to lift and bend my legs and turn my body to the right and to the left like the *ashabul kahfi* ("friends of the cave") as told by the Qur'an.

Sometimes I would wake up in the middle of the night in pain and when, even prayers (do'a) do not seem to be answered, I just cried until I fell asleep again. Of course, as a Muslim I do not say, "Oh Father, Thou have forsaken me."

Let me tell you what happens when night falls.

Since I was in the hospital, we noticed that when "senja" (dusk) approached (about 7.00 p.m.), I began to get all kinds of pain and discomfort. My stomach became bloated, my legs severely numb, I felt like urinating but it did not usually happen. I would cough flame and fresh blood continuously, made worse by my taking the blood thinning medicine after my open heart surgery. No doctor offered any explanation. They gave me a sucking machine. The tube was placed within my reach all the time. One young doctor, seeing me coughing blood continuously for not less than one hour, could only say that he had never seen anything like that.

I intentionally use the word "*senja*" because the Malays believe (or, at least, that was what I was told when I was a boy) that at "*senja*" the jinns would come out. So, seeing my condition worsened everyday starting about that time, some members of my family began to think that it could have some connection with the jinns. Hence, an Islamic medical practitioner was called. Of course he confirmed that it was the work of jinns sent by a *bomoh*.

Now, through observation, I have come to notice that I usually started coughing flam at an interval of 3 to 4 hours. It came in a package: bloating stomach, coughing flam, severe numbness not only of the legs but the whole body, pain (*pedih*) in the back; the urge to urinate and, sometimes and pain at the left foot, at the "*buku lali*".

Having tried all the medicines given by the specialists without satisfactory result; the jinns which had purportedly been removed by the Islamic medical practitioner seem to keep coming back; after years of pain and suffering, I found that they were a sign that my stomach was empty. Then, gas started to accumulate, bloating my stomach, pressing on the nerves and triggering all those numbness and pains. Call it my own diagnosis. What is the cure? Just take two or three pieces of biscuits, within minutes I am relieved. Does it matter?

(I told an orthopaedic surgeon about it. He said he could not explain. Funny, medical doctors unable to explain, Islamic Medical Practitioners attribute it to the work of jinns sent by a human being. In the end, all it takes to overcome it is just a few biscuits every three or four hours.)

Regarding my coughing of blood. One *bomoh* consulted by a relative without my knowledge diagnosed it as "*santau angin*" sent by a *bomoh* through wind! I think I know the cause now. The neuro surgeon placed the Ryles tube "as a precaution in case there is a leakage of the oesophagus" to quote his own words. A barium test done later showed that there was a leakage. So, the blood must have come from that leakage! That is why when a subsequent test showed that there was no more leakage and the Ryles tube was finally removed, there was no more blood, even though the reflux continued, until today. Allah knows better.

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