Amanah (trust) and Physician-Patient Relationship in Islamic Medical Ethics

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Introduction

Conscientious Muslim physicians remain concerned about the centrality of a wholesome physician-patient relationship in ensuring better health outcomes, while fulfilling their accountability to Allah swt. An Islamic conscience facilitates medical interventions aligning with Islamic and general medical ethics. This multifaceted relationship is best understood through the Islamic concept of trust (*al-amānah*), which embodies integrity, trustworthiness[1] or honesty[2] to uphold justice and fairness. *Amānah* refers to fulfilling trust or responsibilities toward the one who grants it or depends on it. Nevertheless, how does this complex concept relate to a humane physician-patient relationship? Islamic ethics are derived and inferred from the Qur'ān, the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), scholarly consensus (*ijmā'*), and analogy-based reasoning (*qiyās*). To understand *amānah* in this context, we turn to these sources, using the methodology of differentiation (*furūq*) - a rational-linguistic approach that examines a term's usage in Qur'ānic and Prophetic contexts[3]

Commonly rendered as 'trust'in its nominal form, the Arabic word *Amānah* (pl: *amānāt*) appears six times in the Qur'an: Allah bestowing the trust of obedience to humankind (Q33:72), warning against betraying mutual trusts (Q8:27), emphasising the duty to return a trust after mutual understanding (Q2:283), commanding belongings to be entrusted to those worthy of them (Q4:58), and highlighting a defining quality of believers - safeguarding their trusts (Q23:8, Q70:32).

At the heart of the term *amānah* is the triliteral Arabic root (ʾa-m-n) / أ-م-ن, which forms approximately 900 words in the Qur'an. The most common are the verbs "to believe, have belief" (*āmana-yu'minu*) appearing 537 times, 'believer' (mu'min) and its variants (e.g., *mu'minūn*) appearing 202 times, and "Islamic faith and belief" (*ʾīmān*) appearing 45 times. Classical linguist Ibn Manẓūr defined security (*amnun*) as the opposite of fear (*khawf*), trust (*amānah*) as the opposite of betrayal (*khiyānah*), and faith (*ʾīmān*) as the opposite of disbelief (*kufr*). The shared triliteral root of these words reflects their deep etymological and conceptual connections, which we will explore in relation to the physician-patient context.

Amānah and the mu'min physician

Faith or belief (*ʾīmān*) is distinguished from a Muslim's submission (*islām*) since explained by the archangel Gabriel[4] (as) to the Prophet (saw): *ʾīmān* as the inward beliefs about Allah, His book and the unseen; *Islām* as outward religious rituals and *Iḥsān* as excellence in faith and submission. *ʾīmān* carries a deeper connotation, as the Qur'ān reprimands[5] *Bedouin* Arabs for claiming "we have believed" (*āmannā*) whilst they had merely submitted (*aslamnā*), and had yet to truly believe (*lam tu'minū*). *Imān* is known to have seventy branches, including testimony of faith, modesty, moderation in

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[1] Shuhari et al 2019
[2] Islam and Samsuddin 2018
[3] Abdur-Rashid et al 2013

[4] One day while Allah's Messenger (saw) was sitting with the people, a man came to him walking and said, "O Allah's Messenger (saw). What is Belief?" The Prophet (saw) said, "Belief is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Apostles, and the meeting with Him, and to believe in the Resurrection." The man asked, "O Allah's Messenger (saw) What is Islam?" The Prophet (saw) replied, "Islam is to worship Allah and not worship anything besides Him, to offer prayers perfectly, to pay the (compulsory) charity i.e. Zakat and to fast the month of Ramadan." The man again asked, "O Allah's Messenger (saw) What is Ihsan (i.e. perfection or Benevolence)?" The Prophet (saw) said, "Ihsan is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not achieve this state of devotion, then (take it for granted that) Allah sees you." Sahih al-Bukhari 4777, Book 65, Hadith 299. sunnah.com/bukhari:4777
[5] "The Bedouins say, "We have believed (*āmannā*)." Say, "You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], 'We have submitted (*aslamnā*),' for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not deprive you of your deeds of anything. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." Q49:14

speech, and removing harmful things from paths[6]. Two direct Qur'anic mentions (Q23:8, Q70:32) of *amanah* come as prerequisites of *ʾīmān* and being a *mu'min* (one who possesses true faith, beyond mere submission). These indicate the broad and profound nature of *amānah,* encompassing multiple aspects of what it means to be faithful and believing. A key characteristic of successful believers is fulfilling trust[7] (*al-amānāt*), whilst a lack of trustworthiness implies weakness of faith[8]. Breaking the trust[9] is a sign of hypocrisy. Allah bestowed *amanah* on humankind as a virtue,

> "Indeed, we offered the *Trust* (*al-amānah*) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant." Q33:72.

Among exegetes (*mufaṣṣirūn*), Aṭ-Ṭabarī related that this *trust* refers to acknowledging obedience to Allah, accepting His obligations, and exercising free will in fulfilling them, consequently opting for reward or punishment that no one agreed to bear and carry out except for humankind.[10] Paying attention to the textual context (*siyāq an-naṣ*), Ibn Ashūr adds[11] that the subsequent verse[12] (Q33:73) explains why humankind is deemed unjust and ignorant: except for the believers, many would turn disobedient, unable to render this *trust*. Fascinatingly, the noun believers (*al-mu'minūn*), derived from the verb "to believe" (*āmana-yu'minu*), is etymologically connected to the word *amānah.*

In the medical domain, Islam highly encourages medical treatment as a divine blessing, as every illness has a cure with Allah's permission.[13] However, medical treatment requires rigorous training and research, and practising medicine without proper expertise is Islamically blameworthy.[14] Studying medicine is particularly demanding, requiring intellectual capacity, financial resources, and physical and emotional endurance, making it a challenge that not everyone can undertake.

For a *Mu'min* physician, medical knowledge and expertise are divinely bestowed *amānāt* gained through intensive study and training, using divine favours such as perceptive senses, intellect and physique.[15] It aligns with a prophetic invocation[16], in which beneficial knowledge is sought alongside good provision and acceptable deeds. Acquiring beneficial knowledge safeguards both material sustenance and spiritual fulfilment, as it contributes to human wellbeing and the upliftment of the *ummah*, fulfilling many branches of *ʾīmān*.

The opposite of this principle is embodied by *Qārūn*, a wealthy figure from Moses' time, whose arrogance led him to declare, "I was only given this because of my knowledge." His downfall serves as a cautionary tale against attributing success solely to oneself or one's intellect and accomplishments"[17] Thus, a *mu'min* physician recognises intellectual capabilities as a form of *amānah* and uses them to acquire beneficial knowledge - another form of *amānah* - to serve humankind - another form of *amānah* to be discussed later.

Preservation and maintenance

Being a Muslim means refraining from harming others, while being a *Mu'min* requires being widely entrusted[18].

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[6] "Faith has over seventy branches or over sixty branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no Allah but Allah, and the humblest of which is the, removal of what is injurious from the path: and modesty is the branch of faith." Sahih Muslim 35b, Book 1, Hadith 60.

[7] "Certainly will the believers have succeeded …. and they who are to their trusts and their promises attentive." Q23:1,8

[8] "There is no faith for the one who has no trustworthiness, and there is no religion for the one who has no covenant." Ahmad 12567. dorar.net/hadith/sharh/119911

[9] "There are four characteristics, whoever has them all is a pure hypocrite, and whoever has one of its characteristics, he has one of the characteristics of hypocrisy, until he gives it up: When he speaks he lies, when he makes a covenant he betrays it, when he makes a promise he breaks it, and when he disputes he resorts to obscene speech … and if he has one of them, he has one of the characteristics of hypocrisy." Sahih Muslim 58, Book 1, Hadith 116. sunnah.com/muslim:58

[10] Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi'il Bayān*, Q33:72

[11] Ibn Ashūr, *At-Taḥrīr wat-Tanwīr*, Q33:73

[12] [It was] so that Allah may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women and the men and women who associate others with Him and that Allah may accept repentance from the believing men and believing women. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful. Q33:73

[13] There is a remedy for every malady, and when the remedy is applied to the disease it is cured with the permission of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious. Sahih Muslim 2204. Book 39, Hadith 95. sunnah.com/muslim:2204

[14] Anyone who practises medicine when he is not known as a practitioner will be held responsible. Sunan Abi Dawud 4586. Book 41, Hadith 93

[15] … and He made for you hearing and vision and intellect that perhaps you would be grateful. Q16:78, and also see At-Tirmidhī 2417: "Man's feet will not move from their place on the Day of Judgment until he is asked about his life, in what he let it perish; about his knowledge, what he did with it; about his money, from where he earned it and on what he spent it on; and about his body, how he wore it out."

[16] "O Allah, I ask You for beneficial knowledge, goodly provision and acceptable deeds". Sunan Ibn Majah 925, Book 5, Hadith 123. sunnah.com/ibnmajah:925

[17] Q28: 76-77

[18] "The Muslim is the one from (the harm of) whose tongue and hand (other) Muslims are safe, and the believer is the one with whom the

In Islamic finance, *al-āmanah* refers to a security deposit, business trust or confidentiality. Moreover, for a trustee, properly distributing entrusted resources from an owner's treasury is akin to giving charity.[19] In the Medinan Qur'ān (Q2:283), trust appears in the context of security deposits[20] where people entrusted with something (*fa in aminaba'ḍukum*) are urged to faithfully render trust. It's an innate human disposition, preserved in the heart and fortified by the Qur'ān and sunnah until its eschatologically destined depletion leads to rampant untrustworthiness and loss of faith.[21]

While mutual trust is encouraged, breaking it is not permissible, irrespective of one party's distrustful conduct[22]. Entrustment can be material or immaterial; regarding financial deposits, Qur'ān (Q3:75) notes that regardless of the amount entrusted, people act according to their trustworthiness levels.[23] In an immaterial sense, Prophet Yaʿqūb (as) admonished his elder sons for mishandling Prophet Yūsuf (as), which made him reluctant to trust them again (*lāta'mannā*) with Yūsuf's brother, Binyamīn.[24]

Based on the above, patients can be viewed as an *amānah* entrusted to Muslim physicians – a notion aligning with the deontological works of Ishāq al-Ruhawi (circa 850–900 CE), whose *Adāb al-Ṭabīb* is one of the oldest surviving works covering ethical principles for physicians from Islamic perspectives[25]. Al-Ruhawi extensively discusses how physicians could cultivate virtues[26] (*adāb*) in every interaction with patients because of a divinely bestowed responsibility. For a Muslim physician, *adāb*-based ethical principles complement *sharīʿah*-based medical obligations, ensuring adherence to Islamic medical ethics.[27] Medical *adāb* encompasses ethical-behavioural aspects and religious obligations of a Muslim, who is also a physician, "the physician's virtuous inner disposition and relationship towards patients" which reflects "the physician's morality and relationship with the divine".[28] In this light, a patient is an *amānah* entrusted to a Muslim physician, and honouring this trust reinforces divine connections.

Authority and responsibility

Ibn al-Jawzī and al-Dāmaghānī[29] classified *amānah* into (i) obligatory matters (*farāʾiḍ*) - Q8:27 and Q33:72, (ii) deposits (*wadāʾiʿ*) - Q4:58, Q23:8 and Q70:32 and (iii) integrity (*ʿiffa*) - Q28:26. As for (i) obligatory matters, Allah says,

> O you who have believed, do not betray Allah and the Messenger or betray your trusts while you know [the consequence]. Q8:27

Exegete ar-Rāzī relates (from Q8:26-28) that Muslims were warned not to betray the trust of Allah and His Messenger, as they had been blessed with Islam after a period of weakness and oppression, and they must not allow worldly trials (e.g., material possessions and children) to divert their attention.[30] Former people of the

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people trust their blood and their wealth." Jami at-Tirmidhi 2627, Book 40, Hadith 22. sunnah.com/tirmidhi:2627

[19] The faithful trustee who gives what he is commanded completely and in full with a good will, and delivers it to the one whom he was told to give it, is one of the two who gives sadaqah. Sunan Abi Dawud 1684, Book 9, Hadith 129. sunnah.com/abudawud:1684

[20] And if you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, then a security deposit [should be] taken. And if one of you entrusts another, then let him who is entrusted discharge his trust [faithfully] and let him fear Allah, his Lord. Q2:283

[21] Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) narrated that trust was preserved in the roots of the hearts of men (in the beginning) and then they learnt it (trust) from the Qur'an, and then they learnt it from the (Prophet's) Sunna (tradition). He also told us about its disappearance, saying, "A man will go to sleep whereupon trust will be taken away from his heart, and only its trace will remain, resembling the traces of fire. He then will sleep whereupon the remainder of the trust will also be taken away (from his heart) and its trace will resemble a blister which is raised over the surface of skin, when an ember touches one's foot; and in fact, this blister does not contain anything. So there will come a day when people will deal in business with each other but there will hardly be any trustworthy persons among them. Then it will be said that in such-and-such a tribe there is such-and-such person who is honest, and a man will be admired for his intelligence, good manners and strength, though indeed he will not have belief equal to a mustard seed in his heart." Sahih al-Bukhari 6497, Book 81, Hadith 86. sunnah.com/bukhari:6497 Also see Sahih al-Bukhari 7276, sunnah.com/bukhari:7276

[22] "Pay the deposit to him who deposited it with you, and do not betray him who betrayed you." Sunan Abi Dawud 3535, Book 24, Hadith 120

[23] "… is he who, if you entrust him with a great amount [of wealth], he will return it to you. And among them is he who, if you entrust him with a [single] silver coin, he will not return it to you unless you are constantly standing over him [demanding it]…" Q3:75

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[24] He said, "Should I entrust you with him except [under coercion] as I entrusted you with his brother before? But Allah is the best guardian, and He is the most merciful of the merciful." Q12:64

[25] Levey 1967

[26] Arabic lexicographers trace the term Adāb to its root meaning "hospitality" or "virtuously inviting people to goodness."

[27] Sartell and Padela 2015

[28] Ibid pp 4-5

[29] Eggen 2006

[30] Ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, Q8:26-28

Scripture were *entrusted*[31] with divine guidance, which they devalued and failed to fulfil obligations.

The verse Q4:58 was revealed during the Day of Victory (*yawm al-fatḥ*), when the Prophet (saw) opened the gate of the Kaʿbah, recited this verse, and handed the keys to ʿUthmān bin Abī Ṭalḥa (ra) as an entrustment[32]. This is an explicit command to render trust:

> "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trust to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing." Q4:58

Ibn Kathīr clarified that these rulings are general (*faḥakamuhumā ʿāmmun*), applying not just to the historical context but to all trust-related matters between Allah and humankind, as well as mutual trust between people[33]. Al-Qurṭubī further elaborated, referencing several companions (*ṣahabah*) and the plural form (*amānāt*) to indicate that this concept extends to everything (*al-amānatu fīkulli shay*), including fulfilling religious obligations, i.e., prayer and fasting, even business transactions.[34] Although the verse is categorised under the deposit-related theme, it is immediately followed by Q4:59, which instructs to obey those in authority.[35] This is why aṭ-Ṭabarī interpreted this verse as referring to those in positions of authority entrusted to fulfil their trust[36]. Thus, *amānah* in Q33:72, Q8:27, and Q4:58 is central to authority and responsibility.

In Greek (*yunānī*) medicine, physicians are termed the "wise one" (*ḥakīm*), a term that also signifies "he who delivers the ruling (*ḥukm*)". Physicians' health recommendations are to be closely followed by patients, who place their trust in them. Therefore, Muslim physicians with specialised knowledge hold a significant *amānah* and are entrusted to carry out their obligations. Abū ʿUbayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ (ra), a prominent commander and one of the ten companions promised Paradise, was known for his trustworthiness. His reputation for authority and sincerity made him the ideal candidate for important missions, such as teaching Islam to a Christian

delegation from Najrān after the Battle of Tabūk.[37] On asking the Prophet about a governing position, a companion was reminded to consider it a type of *amānah,* which could lead to difficulties on the Day of Resurrection if unmet.[38] Habitually entrusting power to the undeserving breaches the *amanah* and signals the approach of the Hour.[39] From this perspective, Muslim physicians carry a dual responsibility - as both authorities in their field and trustees of *amānah* - to uphold medical and Islamic ethics, which further strengthens the physician-patient relationship.

Trustworthiness and confidentiality

Prophet Muhammad (saw) was universally acknowledged as the most reliable and honest person, which led to his honorific "the most trustworthy" (*al-Amīn*), a quality endorsed even by his enemies and non-Muslims. It is derived from the same triliteral root ('a-m-n / ‫أ-م-ن‬‎), through the verb "to be trustworthy" (*amuna*), implying both the process of becoming trustworthy and acquiring this as a permanent characteristic. The Prophet's entrepreneurial career, spanning 40 years, reflected his traits and professional conduct before the commencement of his 23-year mission.[40]

The Qur'ān hails the archangel Gabriel (as) as "trustworthy spirit" (*al-rūḥ al-amīn*) due to their unfaltering obedience and for conveying revelations. Noble human beings like the prophets were divinely guided to embody trustworthiness, serving as exemplary figures for their followers and humankind. Prophet Hūd (as) referred to himself as a trustworthy advisor (*nāṣihun amīn*), while prophets Nūḥ, Ṣāliḥ, Lūṭ, and Shu'ayb (as) implored people for recognition as trustworthy

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[31] See Q5:44, 5:89 and 62:5
[32] Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi'il Bayān*, Q4:58
[33] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm*, v4:58
[34] Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-jāmi' li-'aḥkām al-qur'ān*, v4:58
[35] O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result. Q4:59
[36] Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi'il Bayān*, v4:58

[37] The people of Najran [Christians] came to Allah's Messenger (saw) and said: Allah's Messenger, send along with us a man of trust; whereupon he said: I would definitely send to you a man of trust, a man of trust in the true sense of the term. Thereupon his Companions looked up eagerly and he sent Abu Ubaida b. Jarrah. Sahih Muslim 2420a. Book 44, Hadith 84.
[38] Abu Dharr (ra) said to the Prophet (saw): O Messenger of Allah, will you not appoint me to a public office? He stroked my shoulder with his hand and said: Abu Dharr, thou art weak and authority is a trust. and on the Day of Judgment, it is a cause of humiliation and repentance except for one who fulfils its obligations and (properly) discharges the duties attendant thereon. Sahih Muslim 1825, Book 33, Hadith 19. sunnah.com/muslim:1825
[39] "When honesty is lost, then wait for the Hour." It was asked, "How will honesty be lost, O Allah's Messenger (saw)?" He said, "When authority is given to those who do not deserve it, then wait for the Hour." Sahih al-Bukhari 6496, Book 81, Hadith 85. sunnah.com/bukhari:6496
[40] Noted in the second revealed sūrah (Suratul Qalam): "And indeed, you are of a great moral character." Q68:4

messengers (*rasūlun amīn*).[41] Prophet Musa (as), before prophethood, impressed Prophet Shu'ayb's (as) daughters with his integrity and unblemished character, leading one of them to recommend him for employment as a strong and trustworthy man (*al-qawī al-amīn*).[42] After prophethood, Mūsā (as) asserted his trustworthiness to Pharaoh in delivering the Children of Israel[43]. Prophet Yusuf (as) was appointed an advisor by an Egyptian king, noting his exclusive establishment and trustworthiness (*makīnun amīn*).[44] *Al-amīn* is also associated with non-human entities - a powerful *djinn* (*'ifrīt*) from the Prophet Sulaymān's (as) army claimed to be powerful and trustworthy[45] (*qawīyun amīn*) to fetch the Queen of Sheba's throne in an eyeblink. Thus, the Prophet's honorific is historically significant as angelic or a reflection of the inherent trustworthiness of prophets. This was validated by the Arabs, who were very well-versed in literary excellence, alluding that the Prophet upheld all aspects of *amānah*.

In the medical domain, physicians gain patients' trust for their knowledge and expertise, positioning them in a guardianship role - directly addressing many Qur'ānic renditions of the term. Persian physician Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. circa 925 AD / 313 AH) argued that a patient's treatment outcome is tied to relying on a single trustworthy physician.[46] Due to the high level of trust, patients often confide their deepest issues, relying on physicians to maintain confidentiality[47], which is widely discussed across medical ethics[48]. Obtaining informed consent, protecting confidentiality and privacy concerns are the building blocks of a physician-patient relationship relating to trust[49]. Keeping a secret as *amānah* is the most generic understanding of *amānah* because of a prophetic

saying that defines it as such.[50] The most significant form of trust is not violating the secrecy of marital intimacy.[51]

Security and safety

Amānah is complemented by an *amānah*-relevant term *amn/amān* (security), which extends to non-human entities due to the divine oath by the "secured city" (*al-balad al-amīn*).[52] The Meccans were enjoined to worship Allah, the owner of the Meccan Ka'bah, because he made them safe and secure[53] from hunger and fear. This relates to Prophet Ibrāhīm's (as) supplication: "Make this a secure city" (*ij'al hādhā baladan āminan*), specifically for those who believe (*man āmana minhum*), highlighting the etymological connection between security and faith. [54] The verb *āmana* (to make someone secure from something) is transitive, requiring two objects. A derivative of this verb is one of Allah's attributes, al-Mu'min—the Bestower of faith and security[55]. Interestingly, the words believer (*mu'min*) and faith (*īmān*) originate from the same root, where *āmana* often means "to believe" in its most common Qur'ānic usage.

Renowned Islamic jurist 'Izz al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Salām (d. 660H/1243 CE) summarised the aim of medicine in his Qawā'id al-Aḥkām as securing the patient's benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) by ensuring safety, preserving and restoring health, reducing ailments, and protecting against harm. This principle strongly resonates with *amn*. The Qur'ān also presents security (*āminīn*) as a state of being[56] in three distinct contexts, all involving groups of people feeling safe and secure. In Surat al-Ḥijr (Q15:46, 15:83), the righteous are invited to enter Paradise in peace and security (*udkhulūhā bi salāmin āminīn*), contrasting with the false sense of security felt by the Thamūd in their

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[41] Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger. Q26:107, 125, 143, 161, 178
[42] "One of the women said, "O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy." Q28:26
[43] "Render to me the servants of Allāh. Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger," Q44:18
[44] "And the king said, "Bring him to me; I will appoint him exclusively for myself." And when he spoke to him, he said, "Indeed, you are today established [in position] and trusted." Q12:54
[45] "A powerful one from among the jinn said, "I will bring it to you before you rise from your place, and indeed, I am for this [task] strong and trustworthy." Q27:39
[46] Ragab 2015
[47] Dunn and Hope 2004
[48] Muhsin 2021
[49] Chamsi-Pasha et al 2021

[50] When a man tells something and then departs, it is a trust. Sunan Abi Dawud 4868, Book 43, Hadith 96. sunnah.com/abudawud:4868
[51] The most important of the trusts in the sight of Allah on the Day of judgment is that a man goes to his wife and she goes to him (and the breach of this trust is) that he should divulge her secret Ibn Numair narrates this hadith with a slight change of wording. Sahih Muslim 1437b, Book 16, Hadith 145. sunnah.com/muslim:1437b
[52] And [by] this secure city [i.e., Makkah]. Q95:3
[53] Let them worship the Lord of this House, who has fed them, [saving them] from hunger and made them safe, [saving them] from fear. Q106:3-4
[54] And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this a secure city and provide its people with fruits - whoever of them believes in Allah and the Last Day." Q2:126. Also see Q3:97, Q14: 35-37, Q28:57 and Q29:67.
[55] He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection, the Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the Compeller, the Superior. Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him. Q59:23
[56] In all instances, the word *āminīn* appears as a circumstantial (*ḥāl*) adverb or clause, denoting a state of safety and security.

mountain-carved homes (*buyūtan āminīn*). Secondly, the term appears in four instances reassuring protection from fear or insecurity: Allah made travel between the ancient Yemeni cities of Sabaʾ safe (Q34:18). Prophet Mūsā (as), upon seeing a writhing snake, was reassured (Q28:31). The Prophet's (saw) peaceful entry into Mecca after the conquest (Q48:27). Prophet Yūsuf (as) welcoming his parents into Egypt safely (Q12:99). The term also appears as both a warning and an assurance - Prophet Ṣāliḥ (as) warned the Thamūd (Q26:146). In contrast, people of Paradise are reassured of their eternal safety (Q44:55).

Hence, *amn* is deeply intertwined with *amānah*, emphasising that human trustworthiness is complemented by divine protection. Drawing from Qur'ānic examples, the term reflects the profound connection between faith and protection, underscoring the ethical responsibility to safeguard and preserve well-being, whether in medicine or society.

Tranquillity and assurance

In contrast to *amānah* (أمانة), a close term *amanah* (أمنة) denotes tranquillity and calmness[57] and has two Qur'ānic usages. During the battles of Badr (Q8:11) and 'Uhud (Q3:154), Allah sent down *amanah* (أَمَنَة) to relieve believers' hearts from drowsiness, confusion, distress, and satanic suggestions. This divine calmness was so comforting that everyone, except the Prophet, fell asleep.[58] Ibn Masʿūd (ra) noted that sleeping during battle signifies calmness from Allah, while sleeping during prayer is from Satan.[59] Ar-Rāzī added that this sleep reflected trust in Allah; otherwise, none could sleep on a battlefield.[60]

Assurance is also evident in the dialogue[61] between Allah and Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) regarding how the dead are given life. Ibrāhīm sought this demonstration so his heart

"may be satisfied" (*liyaṭma'inna qalbī*), thereby strengthening his faith. Similarly, the disciples of Prophet ʿĪsā (as) requested a banquet, stating it would reassure their hearts (*wataṭma'inna qulūbunā*).[62] The verb "to satisfy or have tranquillity" (*ṭa'manah*) stems from a quadriliteral root (ṭ-ʾa-m-n / طأ-م-ن), sharing three letters with the triliteral root (ʾa-m-n / أ-م-ن). Both of these roots are conceptually linked, centring on the human heart.[63] The Qur'ān frequently references the reassurance of the heart with faith and security, highlighting the intrinsic connection between these concepts.[64]

An unnamed village (*qaryah*) enjoying a state of safety and security (*āminatan muṭma'innatan* | عامنة مطمئنة) was stripped of its blessings due to disbelief and denial of favours.[65] This narrative illustrates that denial and disbelief — the opposites of faith and belief — lead to the loss of safety and security. It underscores that faith and security are not only linguistically but also conceptually connected in a causal relationship. As seen in Prophet Ibrāhīm's prayer for Mecca's safety and provision, Allah threatened to punish those who disbelieved[66]. Similarly, in the case of the disciples of ʿĪsā, the sent-down banquet came with a warning against disbelief.[67] These instances demonstrate that safety and security, ensured through divine provisions, are subtle examples of trust meant to be preserved with sincere faith.

Ar-Ruhāwī stressed building relationships to understand patients' distress and being receptive to their responses.[68] In the physician-patient relationship, empathy is crucial

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[57] Badawi and Abdel-Haleem 2008, p. 52

[58] 'Ali (ra) said: I remember us on the night of Badr, there was none among us who were not sleeping, except the Messenger of Allah (saw) who prayed facing a tree and offered supplication until morning came … Musnad Ahmad 1161, Book 5, Hadith 574. sunnah.com/ahmad:1161

[59] Al-Waḥidī, *at-Tafsīr al-Basīṭ*, v8:11

[60] Ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, v8:11 and v3:154

[61] And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead." [Allah] said, "Have you not believed?" He said, "Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied." [Allah] said, "Take four birds and commit them to yourself. Then [after slaughtering them] put on each hill a portion of them; then call them - they will come [flying] to you in haste. And know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise." Q2:260

[62] [And remember] when the disciples said, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us a table [spread with food] from the heaven? [Jesus] said," Fear Allah, if you should be believers." They said, "We wish to eat from it and let our hearts be reassured and know that you have been truthful to us and be among its witnesses." Q5:112-113

[63] "Whoever is pleased with Allah as (his) Lord, and Islam as (his) religion, and Muhammad as (his) Prophet, then he has tasted the sweetness of faith." Jami' at-Tirmidhi 2623, Book 40, Hadith 18. sunnah.com/tirmidhi:2623

[64] See Q3:126, 4:103, 8:10, 10:7, 13:28, 16:106, 17:95, 22:11, 89:27

[65] Some exegetes believed it was Mecca while some said it was an example of a foregone civilisation.

[66] And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this a secure city and provide its people with fruits - whoever of them believes in Allah and the Last Day." [Allah] said. "And whoever disbelieves - I will grant him enjoyment for a little; then I will force him to the punishment of the Fire, and wretched is the destination." Q2:127

[67] Allah said, "Indeed, I will sent it [table with food] down to you, but whoever disbelieves afterwards from among you - then indeed will I punish him with a punishment by which I have not punished anyone among the worlds." Q5:115

[68] Levey 1967, p10

for emotional responsiveness, effective communication, allowing time, and attentively hearing complaints.[69] This approach brings assurance and tranquillity to patients' hearts, reinforcing their trust in physicians - a culmination of faith (*īmān*), trust (*amānah*), and a sense of security (*amn*) in human hearts.

Conclusion: Implications for a secular healthcare system

The physician-patient relationship in Islamic medical ethics is fundamentally rooted in the concept of *amānah* (trust) and its relevant terms, which encompass multiple layers and are intrinsically linked to faith. This trust mandates that physicians exhibit transparency, integrity, and honesty in both intention and conduct. *Amānah* manifests in two primary forms: as a divine endowment from Allah to humanity, and as a mutual responsibility between individuals concerning specific duties or obligations. Neglecting this trust can compromise one's faith and incur accountability on the Day of Judgement. The five themes explored converge to highlight that Muslim physicians working in secular contexts may reprise the Qur'anic understanding and the lost Sunnah of *amānah* and its related terms into their medical practice and ethics by embracing a holistic approach. This approach integrates faith-based accountability, cultural humility, and a commitment to ethical integrity, thereby fostering a healthcare environment that is both spiritually and morally congruent with Islamic teachings.

For Muslim physicians, a profound comprehension of *amānah* necessitates[70] the integration of Islamic cultural awareness into patient care[71], ensuring that medical practices align with Islamic ethical principles. Scholars have observed a decline in compassionate patient care, attributing it to the commercialisation and privatisation of healthcare[72], as well as the marginalisation of religious values in medical practice[73]. Al-Ghazal importantly notes: within Islamic medical philosophy, Allah is regarded as the ultimate healer, with physicians serving as instruments of His will. This perspective fosters a stronger physician-patient bond, grounded in the physician's accountability to Allah, contrasting with relationships influenced by materialistic or secular

ideologies that may erode trust.[74] While al-Ghazal critiques Western materialistic cultures, the influence of profit-driven medical care is evident globally, including in developing nations where disadvantaged patients often rely on privatised healthcare systems managed by affluent doctors.[75] Physicians deserve more respect and fair compensation for their dedication; however, pursuing medicine primarily for wealth, social status hierarchy, or authority, and entrepreneurial motives can be a concern.[76] In certain regions, remnants of colonial legacies persist, where titles like "*doctor sahab*" reflect hierarchical dynamics reminiscent of colonial times.[77] In contrast to well-regulated healthcare systems in developed countries, where these colonial legacies are now extinct, privatised healthcare in underdeveloped areas can exacerbate power imbalances, leaving impoverished patients vulnerable and with limited options beyond placing implicit trust in their physicians. To mitigate this vulnerability, many families in developing countries strive to have at least one doctor among them, ensuring trustworthy medical care during times of illness. Altruism is often cited as a motivation for entering the medical profession; however, this noble pursuit attains true altruism only when underpinned by a robust ethical framework, including religious principles and a sense of accountability to Allah. In the context of Muslim physician-patient interactions, the *adāb* (etiquette) component of Islamic medical ethics safeguards the *amānah* between physician and patient, thereby upholding the covenant between the Muslim physician and Allah.

Incorporating the Qur'anic concept of *amānah* (trust) into medical practice requires Muslim physicians to embody transparency, integrity, and honesty, recognising their accountability to Allah and their patients. This trust is foundational to the physician-patient relationship and is deeply intertwined with faith. By understanding *amānah* as both a divine trust and a social responsibility, physicians can navigate the challenges posed by commercialised and secular healthcare systems, ensuring that their practice aligns with Islamic medical ethics. This alignment recognises the ability and authority to provide care as an *amānah* itself, fosters a compassionate, empathetic approach to patient care, enhances the quality of care, strengthens patient trust, and fulfils their religious and moral obligations. For Muslim physicians, restoring this integrity aligns with key objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿa*), specifically the

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[69] Habbal and Arawi 2020
[70] Ahmed 2016
[71] Gatrad and Sheikh 2001
[72] Chamsi-Pasha et al 2022
[73] Khan 2008

[74] Al Ghazal 2004
[75] Ghosh 2008
[76] Muula 2006
[77] Kumbhar 2023

preservation of religion and morality (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*) and the preservation of life and health (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), as articulated by the exegete al-Qurṭubī.[78]

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[78] Arawi et al 2019