

THE HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HEALTH AND HEALING

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Abstract

The research paper highlights the importance of holistic approaches to healing. Holistic health is different way of the treatment is holistic by multiple diseases of treatment in which special by through spiritual healing.

Holistic healing by we different kinds of treatment multiple of disease holistic in healing the spiritual treatment in special of importance. (Spiritual treatment in zikr special of the importance) “zikr” even Allah is supreme in full concentrate.

By means of murshid (Spiritual teacher) and mureed (follower) the spiritual healing, avoiding sinful acts, It is understanding the different states of the mind. The leading of stress to illness and measures to avoid such in the end of concludes a clear understanding of the diseases are not result become of the external environment but because of inner self and the acts of “Allah” is the real healer.

Keywords: *Holistic, Murshid (Spiritual Teacher), Pathology, Spiritual, Zikr*

Introduction

Holistic view of health and illness

‘All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree.’ Albert Einstein

- This approach reflects WHO’s definition of health as ‘a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’. (www.who.int/about/en/)

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Meaning of holism everyone is talking 'holistic' these days. Not only can you have holistic health- care, but you can have 'holistic dentistry', go on a 'holistic holiday', have 'holistic education' and shop at a 'holistic bakery' or 'holistic pet supplier'. It is certainly one of the 'in' words and whatever we do; it all seems to be kosher as long as we do it holistically. The word holism comes from the Greek 'holos' meaning 'whole'. The oxford dictionary defines it as 'the theory that certain wholes are to be regarded as greater than the sum of their parts'. It also adds that it is 'the treating of the whole person including mental and social factors rather than just the symptoms of a disease'. The South African philosopher and politician Jan Christian Smuts coined the term 'holism'. (Soul Matters 2009 p. 72)

Good health, from the Holistic point of view, is that state in which there is balance between the three components of a human being, that is, his body, his mind and his spirit. Conversely, illness is derived from the word 'whole' meaning total or complete. When applied to health, this word means well being at the physical, mental and spiritual levels, all of which combine to constitute a whole person. Good health is thus viewed more as a state of well-being which is not limited to the cure of disease at the physical level alone. It includes the mental and spiritual aspects also, which are considered equal, if not more important, to the health of man.

We are used to thinking that sickness is an attack on our bodies by external agents, usually pathogens like germs, bacteria, viruses, etc, and that treatment means the introduction of an appropriate neutralizing agent, usually a biochemical (medicine) which fights the invader, kills it, and rescues the body. This 'cowboy' impression of how the human healing process works has, to a large extent been fostered by our conviction in the infallibility of medicine, a concept reared and promoted by the large pharmaceutical companies when advertising their products. The discovery of antibiotics and the wide-scale propagation of their 'miracle' powers also did much to foster this false concept of healing. The fact is that both wellness and illness reside within us. That illness, except for a few overwhelming infections, does not involve an external cause but happens when the body's internal and other wise fully adequate defense system , gets weakened, allowing body malfunction, or disease, to occur. Our bodies are conditioned to co-exist with all kinds of pathogens, viruses, germs, and bacteria etc, which exist in our environment and move freely in and out of our system without causing any ill

effect. This is because our innate defense or immune system, which functions at three different levels, the cellular, the endocrine and the mental / spiritual, is fully capable of keeping all potential threats for our health at bay. This function of the body that maintains us in good health is called Homeostasis. Illness occurs when this function of Homeostasis gets impaired. (Molana Allah Yar p.71 2009)

For all those illnesses which have been classified as ‘psychosomatic’, or mind-induced, it is more mental pressure, rather than physical weakness, which is considered as their principal cause. This category of mind-induced, or stress-related, illness includes most cardiac conditions, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, respiratory disorders including asthma, ulcers and ulcerative colitis, sexual dysfunction, arthritis and low back syndrome, depression and anxiety including panic attacks, etc.

How does mental stress cause illness? We know that stress is an integral part of life. It is even considered a necessary part since it drives people to achievement and fulfillment. It is not stress itself but how each of us copes with the stress of life that is important. Or, how much of the strain of living is allowed by us to be passed on to our bodies is what matters to our state of health. Physical response to mental stress is based on what is called the ‘fight or flight’ response, when we are confronted with a stressful situation. The defensive mechanism of the body comes into play. The muscles tense up in preparation for action. The Hypothalamus – a gland that nestles in the center of the human skull – activates other glands, the Pituitary and the Adrenals, which secrete such hormones as adrenaline and do adrenaline. These hormones give rise to visible physical effects in the body. Pupils of the eyes dilate to see better; the heart beats faster to meet the extra need for blood by the muscles; the blood pressure rises and the breathing quickens in response to the heart’s need for more oxygen; the liver releases stored glucose into the blood stream for providing more energy for the impending action. Some body functions however, slow down because of the lesser quantity of available blood. Thus, the kidneys, stomach and intestines slow down their functions. Most importantly, however, the human immune system gets less active in this anxious state, opening the way to infections. This condition is known as the state of ‘Arousal.’ After Arousal, there is a return to the situation of normalcy through the function of Homeostasis, if the response is adequate.

However, if the stress continues and Arousal is repeated over and over again, some of the changes that take place during Arousal become permanent and show up as symptoms of a body under constant stress. These symptoms can be any or several of the following: Headaches, dizziness, blurred vision, aching neck and shoulder muscles, indigestion, heart palpitations, breathlessness, sweating, backache, irritability, wide mood swings, etc. We need to remember that these symptoms are a manifestation of stress and not of disease. Very often the sufferer mistakes them for sickness adding to his worry and intensifying his distress.

The stage at which stress symptoms start flashing for attention and relief is called the Adaptation Stage. If the underlying stress factors are dealt with at this stage, all these symptoms are easily reversible and will be cured.

However, sufferers usually move towards tranquilizers and anti-depressants instead of towards treatment, and gain only very temporary relief. This stage can sometimes last for years. But if there are contributing factors, such as lack of exercise, smoking and alcohol consumption, poor diet, over work, etc., then health breaks down sooner and the body can collapse into catastrophic illness such as coronary heart disease or stroke, etc.

All the Holistic forms of therapy aim at bolstering and restoring the immune system at the three levels, the cellular, the endocrine and the mental, by treating the patient at all these levels through treatments that are both safe and natural. At the physical level, there are several forms of treatment such as Homeopathy, Herbology, Traditional Medicine, Acupuncture, Osteopathy, Shiatsu and Reflexology, etc., all of which rely on enhancing the body's innate ability to heal itself. The medication, mostly of herbal origin, is organic and is easily assimilated by the body; it is non-toxic and has almost no side effects. Cures usually take longer because the medication or treatment works to cure the cause of the symptoms. But when they happen, cures are total.

Similarly, at the mental level, natural therapies include composite programs of stress removal through behavioral counseling, hypnotherapy and meditative practices, designed to bring about awareness and a change of attitude. The patient is motivated to assume responsibility for his illness and to that end, effect behavioral changes that support wellness and prevent illness. They can be dietary modification and a rest and exercise regimen and better adjustment in inter-

personal relationships and even with the sickness itself, which can become a prime stressor. High-risk individuals are made aware of the dangers of their life styles. They are provided with opportunities to participate in nutrition, smoking cessation and hypertension management programs.

Healing at the spiritual level entail reevaluation of life's purpose and goals. Spiritual practices such as Prayer and Meditation, Reiki and Zikr bring about a conscious awakening in the sufferer as to the sublime aspects of life. Acceptance at the deeper level, of the principles of love and compassion, forgiveness and self acceptance, lead people to a more tolerant, sympathetic and harmonious re-adjustment with life. Spiritual strength constitutes the strongest defense against sickness and the means towards achieving higher states of health and well being. (Idara Naqash Bandia, 2009)

Research Methodology

The present paper is based upon the data taken from secondary resources. All literature cited here is taken from books, journals, and research reports. The subject matter of the article is concerned with the practical aspects of research. Therefore, with the help of literature attempt has been made giving personal touches for reaching a solid conclusion.

Literature Review

Holistic View of Health and Illness

Holism sees people as parts of a family, culture and community and regards people as entities with physical, psychological, sociocultural and spiritual aspects.

The earth is made up of systems such as air, land, water, plants and animals and what happens to one affects the other. Similarly, the individual is also composed of interdependent parts that are physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. When one part is not working fully this has an impact on other parts of the person. How many of us get 'the runs' before an important event – particularly when we have to perform in public? How many poor sufferers are bound to experience a severe attack of migraine on a certain day of the week because it is the most stressful one? Comparing holistic healthcare with the earth and its systems is applying the idea of holism on an enormous scale. Iain Scott, a passionate lover of wildlife, sees that life is interconnected and that if we destroy or alter an ecosystem,

thereby threatening the natural balance of the planet, we threaten some or all of the species within it. He comments that ‘interconnectedness is a basic principle of nature’ and that unique individual specimens and species exist within a wider interrelated and interdependent ecosystem. He calls for a paradigm shift that makes us look beyond one unit – the self – to the greater whole. Jeffrey Sachs, an economist, arrives at the same conclusion. Using a term coined by the scientist Paul Crutzen – ‘the Anthropocene’ (human created era of the Earth’s history) – he says that human beings for the first time have taken hold not only of the economy and of population dynamics but also of the planet’s physical systems. However, he considers that ensuring that we continue with human successes ‘without going right over the cliff will prove to be our generation’s greatest challenge’. (Soul Matters 2009 p. 13)

The cultural/social/political mode involves the cultural and social attitudes of patients and health professionals and their impact on the meaning of illness. I have touched on this to some extent already. The archetypal/metaphorical/symbolic mode seeks for the meaning of illness in folklore, myths and legends. It searches for the meaning of illness in the arts. In archetypal medicine, illness brings people together in groups (e.g. patient groups) and addresses the need for a collective experience. The sixth mode consists of space/time/energy and here the human body is seen as a bio energetic organism – an empty space within an even greater empty space. I find it daunting to think that reducing the space between all the electrons and nuclei in all the atoms found in a single human body would result in our being no more than the size of a grain of sand. It brings to mind the Old Testament saying about Abraham’s descendants being as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. The space/time/energy mode regards illness as the result of a disturbance of collective field forces – hence the interest in some of the complementary therapies that consider themselves ‘energy medicine’. Therapeutic touch and Reiki therapy are some examples. (Ibid p. 11)

Spiritual Health

- According to the “right path” Sufis (purely working and practicing the Quranic Paradigm), the Heart (Qulb) is the major center of all our spiritual activities. Our holistic health depends upon the health of the heart. The heart is polluted, or rather rusted, by committing numerous undesirable

and negative activities highly repugnant to the Quran and Sunnah. (Hadees Bukhari Sharif p. 36, 57). Some of these can be viewed as follows:

1. Shirk (Polytheism)
2. Munafaqat – (Hypocrisy)
3. Takabar –(Vanity)
4. Hassad – (Jealousy)
5. Ria- (Showiness)
6. Hubbi Dunya – (Lust for the world)
7. Language Pathology (Backbiting, Lying, Flattery)
8. Haram things like Riba – (Interest, Bribery)
9. Absolutely no prayer, fasting, Haj, etc
10. Many more

The above-mentioned spiritual pathology, leading to major psycho-physiological collapse, can be explained on the vertical dimension of author's doctrine.

In order to free the heart from the said pathology and to make it transparent, the following techniques are suggested based upon the Quranic model:

- Sainly company
- Frequent remembrance of Allah
- Since the whole exercise is highly systematic and experiential, therefore identifying a Murshid-Spiritual leader- is strongly recommended, who can enable his disciple – Murid – to harmonize his psycho-social and spiritual balance, by giving appropriate Zikr therapy. .(Holy Quran 42:53)
- **Salient Features of Murshid – Murid relationship**

Some of the salient features are:

1. Identification of a Murshid (spiritual teacher) is a herculean task.
2. Callibre of *Murshid* : a Quranic role model having certified spiritual chain to Prophet (SA)

3. Once the rapport is established, then hold him forever.
4. Three basic requisites in *Murshid* / Murid relationship:
 - Adab: respect, affiliation
 - Aqedat: reverence
 - Attat: submission
5. The Faiz, Grace, inspiration or spiritual current, depends upon the triangle of no. 4 above.
6. Continuous, sustainable association with the *murshid* adhering to two basic principles:
 - Stability or steadfastness
 - Deep sincerity

(Molana Allah Yar, 2009)

Zikr Practice

1. Regular participation in Zikr sessions as per convenience of Murid (student).
2. One of the Qadrites format followed by the author is :
 - Recitation of Surat Ikhlas eleven times
 - Conveying its Sawab to departed souls and seeking Allah's name, taste, etc.

Recitation of Kalma in four transitions:

 - a) La illah ha il-Allah
 - b) II-Allah, II-Allah
 - c) Allah, Allah, Allah....
 - d) Hu, Hu, Hu.....
 - Muraqba or meditation, silently striking Allah's name on Heart
 - Dua a terminal segment

3. Bait: spiritual contract between Murshid and Murid

4. Post Bait Zikr:

1. Qulbi

2. Ruhi

3. Sirri

4. Nufsi

5. Khuffi

6. Akhfa

1. Pasints

2. Aurrah

3. Sabba Siffat

4. Sultan Izkar

5. Nafi Isbat

6. Isme Zate Noori

- (Awan Ameer, p.11 2010), (Syed Mukhtar ud Din, 2008) and (Zikrullah K 2-March p.15 2008)

Conclusion

Report of a Netherlands Psychologist Van der Hoven

A psychologist from Netherlands, Professor Van der Hoven, announced his discovery about the effect of reading the Quran and repeating the word ALLAH both on patients and on normal persons.

The Dutch professor confirms his discovery with studies and research applied on many patients over a period of three years. Some of his patients were non-Muslims, others did not speak Arabic and were trained to pronounce the word “ALLAH” clearly; the result was great, particularly on those who suffer from dejection and tension. Al-Watan, a Saudi daily, reported that the psychologist was quoted to say that Muslims who can read Arabic and who read the Quran regularly can protect themselves from psychological diseases.

The psychologist explained how each letter in the “ALLAH” affects healing of psychological diseases. He pointed out in his research that pronouncing the first letter in the word “ALLAH” which is the letter A, released from the respiratory system, controls breathing. He added that pronouncing the velar consonant L in the Arabic way, with the tongue touching slightly the upper part of the jaw producing a short pause and then repeating the same pause constantly relaxes the aspiration. Also pronouncing the last letter, which is the letter H makes a contact between the lungs and the heart and in turn this contact controls the heartbeat.

What is exciting in the study is that this psychologist is a non-Muslim, but interested in Islamic sciences and searching for the secrets of the Holy Quran.

Allah, the Great and Glorious, says, “We will show them our signs in the universe and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that This Quran is the Truth.” (Holy Quran 42:53)

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