

# PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE, SPIRITUALITY AND ISLAM

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## INTRODUCTION

In the past century there has been a tendency to exclude spirituality and religion from psychiatry, other than as a form of pathology or pathological response. Spirituality is a common human experience. The New ways of human understanding point positively towards the new paradigm of non-material or spiritual dimension to life. Following observations are pertinent to my arguments:

- ❖ For some patients within mental health settings, religion and spirituality are already emerging as relevant factors in research and clinical care (Koeing et al,2001) In his study, Koeing et al 60% of seriously mentally ill patients reported that religion/spirituality had a great deal of impact on their illness through the feelings of being cared for and of not being left alone.
- ❖ Swinton (2001) defines Cure as eradication of disease. It is the anticipated outcome of attempts to take control of disordered biological and /or psychological process. He describes[Healing] as related to care which attends the deep inner meaning, value and purpose that forms the infrastructure to all human experiences.
- ❖ The notion of having a difference between spiritual care needs and religious care needs is questioned by many researchers including (koeing et al 2001) to include that medical patients have religious and spiritual needs that are intimately related to their physical health conditions. So that religious and spiritual beliefs and practices can often be important for emotional healing
- ❖ Any of components of spiritual care e.g. tolerance, wisdom, compassion, patience, generosity and honesty are already aspects of good psychiatric practice. These can be learned as professional development in terms of spiritual development in terms of spiritual attitudes values and skills.

Challenging the pure materialistic view Kretschmer cited the case of a child who is born blind and dumb.

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Psychologists and physicians began to wonder how such a child could possibly have a full psychological and mental life without access to tactile sensations. How could this happen if matter was really the origin of psychological life and the source of mental processes. Realizing this difficulty Carl Jaspers pointed "The image of man is beyond our reach and eludes scientific research".

## ISLAMIC VIEW

Islamic medicine is based on the image of man in Islam and the Islamic comprehensive view of man and the universe, including cohesion and comprehensive-ness. Thus man is naturally equipped to utilize strength of will, self confidence and faith in God in getting cured from a host of diseases. When we conceive of man as a harmonious composite of body and soul, little wonder will remain in accepting the idea of spiritual treatment and its great physical and psychological efficacy.

In Islam the term spirituality is inseparable from the awareness of one Allah and a life lived according to His will. The principle of oneness 'Al Towheed' must be taken into account in any study of Islamic spirituality.

Quran contains three main terms that relate to human conduct and safe integral and sound treatment. The first is IMAN, which means faith and at its root means, to be at peace and not exposed to danger. The second term is ISLAM, that means to be safe, to be whole and integral and not to disintegrate. Thus Islam bestows safety and peace. The third fundamental concept is TAQWA, which is usually translated as piety or conscious of Allah, but whose root means to protect from getting lost or wasted and to guard against peril.

According to Islam a man is in trouble when he / she is sick. One is close to God and God is close to one at the moments of trouble. One is not afraid or desperate in the security of God's presence. This also implies a sort of adjustment, but in a far wider sense than the he narrowly used in modern psychology. The environment to which man should adjust must be expanded to include;

- 1- The External Environment: location, climate, geographic situation, fresh air ,pure water, sunlight and biological life etc,
- 2- The Internal Environment: The circulating blood with its well balanced chemical components of ptotiens, fats, salts, vitamins, hormones, minerals, neurotransmitters .

- 3- The psychological Environment: Instinct, emotions, intelligence growth and development.
- 4- Socioeconomic and political environment: the family, school street administration, work .all these are important factors in shaping man's personality and upbringing and personality.
- 5- Moral Environment: the surrounding atmosphere with positive virtues or negative vices and their influence on man's attitudes.
- 6- Intellectual environment; The ideas, views, trends, philosophies,traditional and scientific or semi scientific belifes,ideologies,educational and cultural attitudes.
- 7- The Spiritual environment; This is based on supramundane[above world] conceptions in contrast with mundane conceptions. The former world form the core of the mystic sciences of heart 'based on belief on unseen world, historical events and evidnce,introspection.

The most striking uniqueness about Islam is the direct relationship between a Muslim and God .In Islam nothing or no body plays agent or mediator between God and man. And God has promised to respond to whoever calls on him, provided the call is from a pure heart Quran,[S2:v.186]says” When my servants ask thee [Muhammad]concerning me, I am indeed close[to them]:I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on me,”

Faith and trust is man's best shield protecting him against despair and depression. Many physicians have

become aware of the great therapeutic effects of remembrance and prayers. Alexis Carrel,a Noble Prize laureate in medicine[1912], the author of “Man that unknown being” published a short paper about the medical effect of invocation and prayers. He claims that weakness and the atrophy of the sense of veneration and moral obligation is as serious as atrophy of the brain. Moral atrophy has made a man totally blind from the spiritual point of view.

In is safe to assume that while understanding the nature of influence prayers and remembrance have, scientists and thinkers are nearing consensus that there must be a spiritual environment without which the living matter would loose its meaning, value and purpose. It is the point of contact between man, who is a composite of body and soul, and the creator, who is unlike anything we know, according to Holy Quran. Realizing this need, the mental health professional working in our country need to understand the spiritual values of the patients and incorporate these in assessment and treatment.

## REFERENCES

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