Islam And Medicine

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Islam is the religion of all times and places.It is a perfect system of temporal values. By practicing its laws Muslims all over the world not only attain spirituality but the pinnacle of all other glories and gain the wealth of health. There is a great inter-relationship between modern medicine and some of our Islamic teachings.

Every word of Qur'an is in fact an experience of great reality and science is just an effort made towards this reality. Knowledge is limitless and its horizons are constantly expanding with every strike of progress disclosing fresh informations and according to Qur'an knowledge is a comprehensive text and it involves all branches of science, religion, technology, agriculture, engineering and medicine. It is definitely a miracle of our sacred religion that it expands on all branches of human knowledge.

This is known from the following quotation from Qur'an:

"We have revealed to you the Scripture so that it might be a clear evidence for every thing." In the following paper I have tried to elucidate that the guide lines given in the Quran and Sunnah concerned with the promotion of physical health of humans have been duly proved by years of modem medical science research all over the world. Some of them I am going to deal with in this paper.

PRAYERS:

In Sura Moon "God deprecates those who are careless in their prayers offer them only for show." The blessed Prophet told us "Prayers are certainly health promoting." Although the real purpose of prayers is the worship of God yet there is a large number of additional benefits also.

EXERCISE:

As we eat three times daily we need exercise to lessen the cholesterol in the body which increases in blood after meals, thickens blood and leads to the deposition of slit in the arteries. In addition to saving us from the sins and elevating us to the heights of spirituality prayers are great help in maintaining our physical health. They keep our body active, help digestion and save us from muscle and joint diseases through regular balanced exercise. They help the circulation of blood and also mitigate the bad effect of cholesterol. Prayers play a vital role in acting as a preventive measure against heart attack, paralyses, premature senility, dementia,

loss of control on sphineters, diabetes mellitus etc.

Collateral circulation plays a major role in decreasing the danger of heart attack in patients. Patients above 55 years of age in which this type of circulation is developed have less severe attacks. It is possible to speed up the development of collateral circulation by regular and balanced exercises which is present in the prayers are not only potent, preventive measure against coronary heart diseases but also help in the development of collateral circulation in those people who have already suffered from a heart attack or are prone to it.

Heart patients should offer-the five obligatory prayers regularly as they get the permission from their doctor to leave bed. The arrangement of prayers is such that those at the time of empty stomach are brief but those after meals are longer and give more exercise to the body. During the month of Fast (Ramadan) the additional twenty Rakaat (Tarawih) are added to the late evening prayers because more than normal food is usually consumed after breaking fast. The performance of prayers put almost all muscles of the body in action. Different groups of muscles are activated while performing prayers. During Sajda blood supply to the brain is improved. One of the useful methods to strengthen the muscles of the knee joints to mitigate the strain on knees in osteo arthritis is the regular exercise of these muscles during prayers.

HEART:

This vital organ of the body has to be always healthy and efficient as it is responsible for the circulation of blood. Diseased heart results in deterioration of the healthy body. This knowledge we obtained after centuries of scientific research yet it was simply told to us fourteen hundred years ago by our great Prophet (peace be upon him). "Verily in the body there is such apiece of flesh that if it remains alright the whole body keeps well but if this piece of flesh develops some defect the whole body becomes unhealthy. Behold,- this piece of flesh - it is heart." (Bokhari, Muslim ...

SIESTA:

It was the habit of our blessed Prophet to sleep for a while after lunch, his companions also followed this practice. This short nap gives relief to the vital organs of the body like heart and brain.

MODERATION IN FOOD:

Both Qur'anand Hadithhave touched this topic, Qur'antells us in Ayah 30 of Sura Al Airaf: "O children of Adam, look to your adornment of every place of worship and eat and drink but

not prodigal Lo! He loveth not the prodigals." Strenthening this order, the Prophet has strictly forbidden over eating in the following Haith: "It is enough to eat few morsels of food to keep one's back straight." "If you must eat more, be sure that only one third of your stomach is filled with food, one third is left for water and the remaining one third for air."

"A Muslim eats in one intestine (stomach) whereas a non believer eats in seven intestine." It has been proved beyond doubt that over eating is the root of many diseases and also responsible for premature senility. It produces obesity, predisposes to dangerous diseases like diabetes, Menitus, hypertension, coronary heart disease and paralysis.

DIABETES MELLITUS:

This is due to insulin deficiency. Overeating gets the special cells of the pancreas (islets of Langerhans) over worked so it cannot meet the increased demand for insulin . Those cells may get tired, atrophy and causes difficiency of insulin .

PARALYSIS, CORONARY HEART DISEASE & PREMATURE SENILITY:

Their basic course is the narrowing of the coronary arteries. Paralysis is the natural result of blocking of an artery in the brain, should this happen in the heart Myocardial infarction results.

Premature senility is installed when majority of the arteries in the body get narrowed. Slit in the form of cholesterol and triglycerides is deposited in the arteries. Over eating increases blood cholesterol levels. Pork and beef contain high cholesterol values while on the other hand birds have the least amount. Qur'an mentioned that birds meat is one of the specialties of Paradise.

Olive has been repeatedly mentioned in Qur'an, and statistics shows that heart attacks occur more in Northern Italy where they use butter and margarine for cooking than in Southern Italy where olive oil is generally used. Patients suffering from narrowing of the coronary artery usually develop the heart attack after a heavy meal.

FORBIDDEN ARTICLES OF FOOD:

1. Blood:

Ingested blood on reaching the intestine is acted upon by various bacteria normally present there resulting in poisonous products like ammonia which is toxic to the liver.Therefore,God has forbidden us to eat or drink blood and has prescribed such a method for slaughtering animals that most of their blood is shed.

2. Pork:

There are two harmful worms harbored by pigs, one is "TAENIASOLIUM" which on ingestion passes to the brain and causes epilepsy. The other one is"TRICHINELLASPIRALIS"which passes to the muscles and brain causing muscular swelling and pain and also epilepsy. Pork has more fat and cholesterol than any other meat.

3. Alcohol:

Numerous diseases have been attributed to alcohol like dyspeptic trouble, peptic ulceration, cancer stomach, pancreatitus, cirrhosis liver, vitamin deficiency and coronary heart disease.

CIRCUMCISION:

One of the criteria of Islam is that every Muslim should be circumcised. This is medically suggested now a days as a toxic substance called Smegma may collect under the redundant skin causing cancer of the genitalia in both man and his wife, inflammation of the penis, phthisis, sticking of the redundant skin over the urethral opening leading to difficulty in urination.

WASHING AFTER DEFECATION:

This beneficial habit saves us from Pilonidal sinus which is an abscess with hair inside occurring near anal opening. Pylonephritis: This is more in women due to the proximity of the urethral opening to the anus so toilet paper while being used may bring germs like E. coli to the urethra.

ABOLUTION:

A pre requisite of prayers yet one of the most hygienic procedure as it usually keeps the exposed parts of our body clean and also the parts of entry like mouth and nose thus avoiding Infection.

PREVENTION OF INFECTION:

Infection may be transmitted through dirty hands or dirty food.

Hands: It is essential to wash our hands before and after meals. Our blessed Prophet told us: "It is a blessing to wash your hands before and after meals" (Abu Daud & Tirmizi) He has also advised us not to clean our hands with a towel before meals as they may convey infection from one person to the other particularly viral diseases like infective hepatitis or bacterial infection

like Typhoid dysentries and cholera.

Or Prophet said "Whosover gets up from slumber should not dip his hand in any utensil unless he washes them three times, who knows what things he has been touching during sleep." (Bokhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Nisai)

ARTICLES OF BEVERAGES:

These articles should be handled with great care. If the food is in open utensil they should be covered to avoid contamination. Stressing this our Prophet said "Cover up the utensils and tie the mouth of the water skins." (Bokhari, Muslim) He said, "Why did you not cover the utensil carrying the milk even if-it was with a piece of wood."

DENTAL HYGIENE:

Particular stress has been laid by our Prophet on this as it is very important in the prevention of disease. He attached great importance to "Miswak" a twig of a tree used for brushing teeth. "If I had not thought this to be an unbearable hardship for my followers I would have prescribed the use of Miswak before every prayers." (Bokhari, Muslim) According to modern dentistry the best method of using a Miswak or a tooth brush is up and down the length of the teeth and this exactly the way our Prophet used his Miswak.

KHILLALA:

The blessed Prophet said "Whosoever eats should pick bits and pieces from in between his teeth." It is beneficial act so that those do not rot and produce disease.

HEATSTROKE:

Covering the head and neck as our Prophet used to do, mitigate the danger of hyperpyrexia which is due to imbalance of the heat control centre situated in the hind brain, which may lead to death.

TREATMENT OF FEVER:

Death occurs if the temperature of the body exceeds 106 degrees irrespective of the cause. Medically speaking the first line of treatment is to lower the temperature by cold water, ice sponging or even immersing the patient in cold water. On this Prophet said: "The fever is related to the Hell. Application of cold water keeps it away." (Ibne Maja)

CONSTIPATION:

The blessed Prophet advised that while defaecating keep pressure on the left foot (Tibrani). In squatting position this maneuvers will cause pressure on the descending colon. Medically this helps evacuation of feaces from the descending colon thus relieving constipation, particularly when muscles of the abdomen are weak.

DISEASES OF DIGESTION:

Several Hadiths pertaining to this were said:

"It is unbecoming to eat in the Bazar (Market)."

"Whosoever eats earth aid his death." (Tibrani)

" Use curry with food even if it is in the form of water. " (Tibrani).

"Vinegear is a very good curry."

"The best curry is common salt."

Salt depletion through perspiration during summer is increased thus it is obligatory to use common salt during this period. Our Prophet liked pumpkin (one of the vegetables) as it is easily digested and less likely to produce flatulence. Our Prophet said. "It is not right to eat your food quickly, besides this one should eat from what lies nearest to one" (Bokhari, Muslim)

EPIDEMIC PREVENTION:

Hygiene is very important. Cleanliness prevent infection entering the citadel of human body and this guards us against ill health and epidemics- God ordered our Prophet in Sura Al-Muddassir: "O, Prophet keep your apparel clean and meticulously avoid filth and rubbish." Our Prophet said, "God Almighty is himself pure and likes purity, God himself is clean and likes cleanliness." (Tirmizi)

"God Abnighty dislikes dust, dirt and disheveled hair." "Avoid three things which are cursed. To urinate at the source of water, in the shade, in the pathways." (ibne Maja)

"No one should pass water in standing water." (Bokhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood)

"If any one of you yawns,,cover your mouth with hands." (Muslim, Abu Dawood)

One should avoid coughing, sneezing, yawning or laughing with fully open mouth near other persons as the breathed out bacteria may spread in the atmosphere and be conveyed to other persons.

STREET AND ROADS:

Town planning is based on broad and airy roads so that there is no obstruction to the flow of

traffic and to avoid congestion which helps of communicable diseases. Our blessed Prophet fourteen hundred years ago said "keep the breadth of the streets seven arms length.

ACUPUNCTURE:

Ibis was mentioned in the authenticated Hadith as an effective treatment of several disease. Research work is being carried out in China and other parts of the world to use acupuncture as a method of treatment.

There are other aspects of medicine which have been dealt with in Islam for example:

1. Quacks should not treat patients.
2. Treatment and prevention of disease have been recommended and practiced by the Prophet.
3. When you visit a patient do not stay long.

There are many priceless gems of knowledge in the Qur'an and Hadith from which man can benefit immensely. These are but brief facts of medicine which have been mentioned before in .Qur'an and Hadith and there is a lot more to be discovered and studied