

## Al-Qur'an as a Remedy for Human Physical and Spiritual Illnesses, and Social Vices: Past, Present and Future

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### Abstract

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Al-Qur'an is the only inimitable Divine Scripture revealed by Allah the Most High to His chosen and most beloved Prophet and Messenger Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), specifically for guidance to all mankind on all aspects of worship to Him and mundane affairs of this temporal life, so as to achieve salvation and eternal bliss in His Paradise in the Hereafter. In spite of that, there are many indications in the Qur'an for cure/healing and solutions of physical, spiritual and social illnesses of mankind. This was applicable in the past, relevant now and in the future life of all generations of people. There are also many supportive narrations from *Abadith* (traditions/sayings) of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) on relevance of the Qur'an for cure of diseases, such as his teachings for invocations of Qur'anic verses and other modes of prayer for treatment of different kinds of diseases. The Qur'an also provides injunctions for solutions to social vices within any community. This article is an attempt to throw light on the aforementioned.

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### 1. Introduction

The World Health Organization (W.H.O) defined Health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.<sup>1</sup> In line with this definition it could be understood that a healthy person is one who is free from any physical or mental illness, or any social deviation. Physical illnesses are those affecting normal functions of the body, mental illnesses are those affecting the mind, while social deviations are abnormal behaviours and conditions of inter-personal relationships. In addition to these, there are spiritual illnesses which affects a person's mind, feelings and character, all of which are connected with faithfulness in religion.

Al-Qur'an which was revealed to the best of mankind, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) almost fifteen centuries was, is and would continue to be a mercy, guidance and cure for all physical, mental, social and spiritual illnesses of mankind, so long as it is believed upon, carefully studied and understood, its teachings practically and faithfully implemented in all life activities. This paper is an attempt to highlight on the above mentioned issues within the contexts of the divine literature (Qur'an) and *Sunnah* of the noble Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

### 2. The Qur'an as a Remedy for Physical Illnesses

A Muslim believes that there is cure for physical illnesses of man in the Glorious Qur'an, as Allah (SWT) stated in the following verse:

We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'an that which is a healing<sup>2</sup>

For instance, there is an indication in the Qur'an that honey, produced by the bee, is a medication for human physical illnesses, thus:

There issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colours, wherein is healing for men: verily in this is a sign for those who give thought.<sup>3</sup> It has been confirmed by modern medical scientific researches that honey can be used as medicine for some diseases such as stomach pains, burns and scalds, chronic ulcers etc.

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This is supported by a *hadith* of the Prophet (SAW) which stated that healing is in three things: A gulp of honey, cupping and cauterization (branding with fire) but I forbid my followers to use cauterization.<sup>4</sup> Also in another *Hadith* narrated by Abu Sa'id al- Khudari: A man came to the Prophet (SAW) and said; my brother has some abdominal trouble. The Prophet said to him, Let him drink honey. The man came for the second time and the Prophet said to him: Let him drink honey. He came for the third time, and the Prophet said: Let him drink honey. He returned again and said: I have done that. The Prophet said: Allah has said the truth, but your brother's abdomen has told a lie. Let him drink honey. So he made him drink honey and he was cured.<sup>5</sup> It is to be realized from this *hadith* that repeating taking doses of medicine before one is cured from a disease is a *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW).

One of the Prophet's of Allah (SWT) Ayyub (AS) was affected with some physical, mental and spiritual problems, among them was chronic skin disease, upon which he prayed to Allah (SWT) thus: And (remember) Ayyub, when he cried to his Lord: Truly distress has seized me, but thou art the most merciful of those who are merciful.<sup>6</sup> His prayer was responded positively as follows: So we listened to him: we removed the distress that was on him<sup>7</sup>

How his distress was removed, was indicated in other verses of the Qur'an, where Allah (SWT) mentioned: Commemorate our servant Ayyub, behold he cried to his Lord, The evil one has afflicted me with distress and suffering<sup>8</sup> (The command was given): Strike with thy foot: Here is (water) wherein, to wash, cool and refreshing, and (water) to drink.<sup>9</sup> So, Ayyub (A.S) was commanded to strike either the earth or a rock, with his foot, from where some special water gushed, which he was further instructed to wash his body with, and drink, so as to serve as cure for his disease and distress, as well as cooling and refreshing for his body and soul.

It could be noted that impliedly Ayyub (A.S) was instructed to wash his body with that water for curing the external (skin) organisms, and to drink for curing the internal organisms. Even in the contemporary medical treatment of skin infections both external ointments or suspensions and oral drugs or injections are prescribed by doctors.

Another thing to be noted is the respect and Glorification of Ayyub (A.S) to Allah (SWT) for not ascribing his sickness and distress directly to Him (Allah), but to the Devil, when he said: *The evil one has afflicted me with distress and suffering.* This was similar to what Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) said while he was preaching to his father and his community, that is, *'When I am ill, it is He who cures me'*.<sup>10</sup> All of them did not say: when Allah (SWT) afflicted them with distress or illness, knowing fully that it is Allah (SWT) who destines for anything to happen on his servants.

### 3. Ruqyah as a Means of Treatment

*Ruqyah* is a means of treatment connected with the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW). It is a way of seeking for treatment from Allah (SWT) whereby some verses of chapters of the Qur'an, prayers of the Prophet (SAW) or any words of supplication in line with the Qur'an and *Hadith* are recited by a sick person, or by somebody else on his/her behalf for cure of a disease or unpleasant condition of life. The legal permission of *Ruqyah* could be deduced from a *hadith* narrated by A'isha (R.A) who reported that: "The Prophet ordered me or somebody else to do *Ruqyah* if there was danger from an evil eye."<sup>11</sup>

It is to be noted that there is no conflict between contemporary medical treatment and *Ruqyah*. Both are embarked upon for treatment of sicknesses. However, in majority of cases *Ruqyah* is resorted to, where medical treatment fails to cure a sickness, such as sicknesses caused by *Jinns* or magic. Further evidences and examples of *Ruqyah* are buttressed in the following *Abadith*: "Anas bin Malik (R.A) narrated that Allah's Apostle allowed one of the *Ansar* families to treat persons who have taken poison, and also who are suffering from ear ailments with *Ruqyah*."<sup>12</sup>

Aishah (R.A) narrated that during the Prophet's fatal illness, he used to recite the *Mu'awwidhat* (*Surat – Al-Nas and Surat Al- Falaq*) and then blow his breath over his body. When his illness aggravated, I used to recite those two *suras* and blow my breath over him, and make him rub his body with his own hands for its blessing. (Ma'mar asked Al-Zuhri: How did the Prophet used to blow? Al-Zuhri said: He used to blow on his hands and then passed them over his face)<sup>13</sup> Ibn Abbas narrated that some of the companions of the Prophet came across a tribe among the tribes of the Arabs who did not entertain them. Shortly, the chief of that tribe was bitten by a snake (or scorpion). They said to the companions, have you got any medicine with you or anybody who can treat with *Ruqyah*.

The Prophet's companions said: You refuse to entertain us, so we will not treat your Chief unless you pay us for it. They agreed to pay them a flock of sheep. One of the Prophet's companions started reciting *Surah – al-fatibah*, gathering his saliva and spitting it at the snake bite. The Chief got cured, and his people gave the sheep to the companions, but they said: We will not take it unless we ask the Prophet whether it is lawful. When they asked him he smiled and said: How do you know that *Surah – al – fatibah* is a *Ruqyah*? Take it (the flock of sheep) and assign a share for me.<sup>14</sup> This *Hadith* indicates the legality for accepting price for medication or *Ruqyah*. In another *Hadith* Aisha (R.A) narrated that the Prophet used to treat some of his wives by passing his right hand over the place of ailment and used to say: O Allah, the Lord of the people! Remove the trouble and heal the patient, for you are the Healer. No healing is of any avail but Yours; healing that will leave behind no ailment.<sup>15</sup>

Also, Aisha (R.A) narrated that whenever Allah's Apostle went to bed, he used to recite *Surat – Al-Ikhlās*, *Surat al-falaq* and *Surat al- Nas* and then blow on his palms and pass them over his face and those parts of the body that his hands could reach. And when he fell ill, he used to order me to do like that for him.<sup>16</sup>

In the contemporary period, *Ruqyah* is undertaken for treatment of sicknesses or difficult conditions and behaviours of life caused by *Jinns* to human bodies and mind. Some of the sicknesses and harms caused by *Jinns* are intense fear of mind, psychological and nervous diseases such as insanity, depression, anxiety, tension, epilepsy, *waswas* (whispers from Satan) and personality disorders. Others are physical sicknesses which human medicine cannot cure and which there is no medical cause, hallucinations (mistaken perceptions of objects), hatred and enmity between people, female diseases such as infertility, heavy bleeding, menstrual irregularities and infections, sexual problems like impotency and premature ejaculation, tempering with and causing damage to houses and material possessions, such as by causing fire outbreaks, etc.<sup>17</sup>

Remedies and cure for all the above mentioned sicknesses are undertaken by strong belief (*Iman*) in *Al-Tawbeed*, recitations of specific verses and chapters of the Qur'an, and *Adbkar* (remembrances of Allah by repeating some supplications and recitations) in the morning, evening and night. This is acquired by consulting experts in the field of *Ruqyah* or inviting them to come and perform it on behalf of the sick person, and giving instructions on what is to be done repeatedly after their recitations. Some of the chapters and verses of the Qur'an often recited for *Ruqyah* include those in chapters of *Mu'awwidhat*, *Saffat*, *Yasin*, *Jinn*, *Baqarab* and *al-fatiba*. Sometimes recitations of verses of the Qur'an are accompanied with taking oral herbs of *Habbatus-Saudah* and application of *Zaitun* oil on the body, or drinking *zam zam* water.

#### 4. Qur'an as a Remedy for Spiritual Sickness

Spiritual sicknesses are those affecting morality, character and behaviour of a person. Thus, connected with evil temptations of the heart. In the story of Prophet Yusuf (A.S) on what happened between him and the wife of his master he stated thus:

Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His mercy: but surely My Lord is oft – forgiving, Most merciful.<sup>18</sup> This indicates that every soul of a human being is liable to commit sins and evil deeds, unless that which is protected by Allah (SWT) like those of His chosen Prophets and Messengers, and pious believers.

*Ibn Umar* (R.A) narrated a *Hadith* in which the Prophet (SAW) said, 'certainly in the body (of a man) there is a flesh, if it is appropriate, the whole body will be appropriate, if it becomes decayed the whole body becomes decayed (corrupt or immoral) certainly that is the Heart.<sup>19</sup> Among the remedies of spiritual illnesses is the remembrance of Allah (*Al-Dhikr*) as He stated in the Qur'an thus: Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah; for without doubt, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction.<sup>20</sup>

The best form of *dhikr* is constant recitation of the Qur'an, contemplation on its meanings and putting its teachings into action. By doing so, one will become closer to Allah (SWT) who will safeguard him against commitments of evil deeds. Another remedy for spiritual illness is establishment of the five daily prayers, especially in mosque congregations. Allah (SWT) stated in the Qur'an that prayers prevents a Muslim from commitment of shameful and unjust deeds.<sup>21</sup> Therefore whoever is constant in observance of prayers punctually and correctly as performed by the Prophet (SAW), more so, if he indulges in additional supererogatory prayers (*Nawafil*), Allah (SWT) will protect him from evil acts.

## 5. Qur'an as a Remedy for Social Vices

In the contemporary period a lot of social vices are rampant within all communities of Muslims and non-Muslims. These are ranging from inter-personal relations to societal and international levels. Societal decadence is very high resulting to insecurity, hatred, indiscipline, corruption, greediness, communal, national and international wars everywhere, terrorism, kidnaps, murder, hijack of planes, gambling, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intoxication and drug abuse, betrayal of trust, indecency and shamelessness to mention just a few.

All the above mentioned and many other social vices could be cured (that is removed from the society) by strong belief and faith in Allah (SWT) as the Creator, Sustainer, Guide and Law Giver of mankind. This could be achieved by accepting Islam and following all the teachings in the Qur'an with regards to Allah's (SWT) commandments for His total worship and abiding to His does and don'ts.

The entire Qur'an was revealed as a Blessing for the purpose of guidance to mankind for worship to Allah (SWT), self discipline, morality and societal peaceful co-existence. In many portions of the Qur'an there are indications for remedies of all the above mentioned evils. Practical implementations of teachings of chapters of the Qur'an such as *Surah – al – Abzab*, *Surah- Al- Hujurat*, *Surah- al-Nur*, *Surah al-Baqarah*, and indeed all other chapters, would definitely solve all our contemporary social vices and moral decays.

Instances are that the Qur'an has condemned enmity and hatred between Muslims, warned against corruption and greediness, called for reconciliation of conflicts before they emerge to wars and killings, declared killing of an innocent person as a great sin, equivalent to killing of all mankind, ordained for prohibitions of gambling, fornication, lesbianism, homosexuality, consumption of wine and other intoxicants, as well as indecency and betrayal of trust. If all these are studied from the Qur'an and complied with, we would have a hitch-free and peaceful society.

## 6. Conclusion:

In the fore-going discussion, it has been highlighted that the Qur'an is a remedy for all human physical, spiritual and societal moral decays. This is in line with Allah's (SWT) statement that He has not left anything untouched in the Qur'an, thus, it composes of everything required for guidance and solutions to all human problems. In order to benefit from these Blessings of Allah (SWT) the Qur'an has to be merged with the *Sunnah* of the noble personality of the best of mankind Muhammad (SAW) to whom it was revealed, from whom we got it, who explained its meanings and details, practiced it's teachings and commandments. Without this, we would be far away from Allah's (SWT) Blessings of guidance, health, peace and security in this world and the Hereafter. May Allah (SWT) Protect, Guide and Save us from all calamities.

## 7. End Notes:

1. C. Livingstone, (199), *Pocket Medical Dictionary (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)*, Harcourt Brace and Company Ltd, Edinburg, P. 126
2. Q: Ch: 17: 82
3. Q: 16:69
4. *Sahib Al-Bukhari, Book of medicine, Hadith* No. 585
5. *Ibid, Hadith* No. 588
6. Q: 21:83
7. *Ibid*, Verse 84.
8. Q: 37: 41
9. *Ibid*, Verse 42
10. Q: 26:80
11. *Sahib Al-Bukhari, opcit, Hadith* No. 634
12. *Ibid, Hadith* No. 617
13. *Ibid, Hadith* No. 631
14. *Ibid, Hadith* No. 632 and 633
15. *Ibid, Hadith* No. 639, 640, 642 and 646

16. *Ibid*, Hadith No. 644
17. A.M Khalil, (2005), *The Jinn and human sickness, Remedies in the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah*, PP. 52-88, Global Leadership in Islamic Books, Saudi Arabia.
18. Q: 12:53
19. *Imam Al-Nawawi's 40 Abadith*, Hadith No. 6
20. Q: 13:28
21. Q: Ch: 29:45

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