

The Study of the Various Types of Healing and Their Relationship with Prayer as Explicated in the Quran and the Tradition

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Abstract

Background and objective: The holy Quran has used the term "healing" for three issues and healing means the health, treatment, and recovery. The present study aims to examine some verses in the Quran and also some related narrations regarding the healing of diseases.

Methods: The resources used by the researchers in this study have been the major interpretations of Shiite and Sunnite and some narrative sources including "Behaar Al-Anwaar".

Results: some scholars have made no comments on the healing effects of the Quran on physical illnesses and some have said that such healing effects work only when human medical treatments have been exhausted without any result. The other group has noted that the healing powers of the Quran are in fact the rules that it has set regarding the prohibition of some foods and drinks and its healthcare recommendations. Finally some others have put the idea that the healing powers of the Quran are in effect some sorts of prayers; this fourth group believes that there are different kinds of prayers for different purposes, and, though most of the prayers are clearly supplications to God, some sorts of prayers are used for healing of the sick by writing them on a piece of paper and making the sick people carry them, by reading them to the sick, and by writing them on a plate and then washing them off and making the sick drink that water.

Conclusion: The positive effects of the Quran on physical, mental and psychological health are indications of paying more attention to the mental aspects.

Keywords: Healing; the Quran, Disease, Health.

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Introduction

The holy Quran has called itself "healing", meaning that it heals and treats diseases. This term has been used in three different verses in the Quran which are as follows:

2. "O mankind! There hath come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts,- and for those who believe, a guidance and a Mercy"(1).
3. "We send down (stage by stage) in the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss"(2).

1. "... Say: "It is a Guide and a Healing to those who believe;"(3).

The above-mentioned verses all have a common point and that is their emphasis on the healing powers of the Quran. In these verses, the Quran has been said to heal all kinds of abhorrent moral corruptions and mental diseases and it has also been clarified that such kind of healing is for the believers only and that evildoers have no share in this kind of healing.

Indeed the Holy Quran has been sent down by God for all the people of all times as the Quran itself has also emphasized this fact in the

following verse: "This is no less than a Message to (all) the Worlds" (4). So how is it possible that only some of the people, i.e. the believers, will benefit from this source of healing while many others, i.e. the unbelievers, will, not only never benefit from it but they will also be harmed by it?

The fact is that the healing powers of the Quran work in much the same way as its guidance power. That is to say, just as its guidance is only for the believers, as it is explained in the verse: "This is the Book, in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah" (5), its healing powers are also particularly for the believers and the evildoers will not benefit from them. The reason is their ill manner and the false beliefs that they themselves have acquired, as the Quran also states this fact: "By no means! But on their hearts is the stain of the (ill) which they do!"(6); thus the Quran becomes vague and unclear to them as the Quran itself has described such individuals: "for those who believe not, there is a deafness in their ears, and it is blindness in their (eyes)" (7).

The holy Quran clearly indicates that the enemies of the right will add to their ignorance and misery by reading the Quran instead of enlightening their mind and soul with the Divine light in it because their nature and essence has changed due to their disbelief, hypocrisy and the atrocities they have committed. Such individuals will, therefore, defy the right wherever they find it.

Moreover, defying the right will, in turn, further corrupt their evil natures and will fortify the spirit of rebellion against the right in them. Therefore, for one to be able to truly use the Quran, one should be previously prepared to receive the mercy of God in his/her cleansed heart and soul; then nurture the prone hearts to heal one's heart and soul with the healing powers of the Quran.

Method

The following metaphor has been used by some scholars to illustrate the differing effects of the Quran and its healing powers on different people:

"If a rich food is given to a hard working scholar or a researcher, he will use the energy from that food for acquiring more knowledge and learning more about what's right. However, if the same rich food is given to an atrocious tyrant he will use the energy from that food to commit more atrocities and oppress more people. The difference here lies, not in the food, but in the nature of the people and their views and thoughts"(8).

Results

Healing Moral and psychological illnesses

There is a consensus among the Quranic exegetes that the Quran is, without a doubt, the single healing prescription for the treatment of various moral corruptions and different psychological illnesses. For instance, the following remarks have been made by Allameh Tabatabaei with regard to this issue:

"The holy Quran is a healing since it first clears all kinds of disease and distortions from the heart and thus paves the way for moral virtues and values to replace them. It is a mercy, therefore, for the Quran restores one's innate purity and spirituality; it is also a healing since it purifies the heart from all the obstacles against prosperity and makes it ready to accept felicity. It is also a mercy because it brings to a believer's heart the feeling of felicity and gives them the bounty of forbearance and certainty. Therefore, the Quran is both a healing and mercy for the hearts as it is a guide and mercy for those souls who have been led astray"(9).

Therefore, the verse "We send down (stage by stage) in the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe" means that God has sent down the thing which heals the diseases of the heart and the soul in the Quran and restores the original health and stamina to the people's hearts and souls so bestows upon the people the blessings of dignity and felicity.

Allameh Tabatabaei also interprets the verse "Say It is a Guide and a Healing to those who believe" as follows:

"This verse indicates that these properties and effects of the Quran are not restricted to its Arabic words; rather, it is the people who are of two kinds as far as the properties of the

Quran are concerned: first are those who are believers and the second are unbelievers. Otherwise, the difference lies not in the effects of the Quran but in the people who intend to use them for the Quran contains guidance and healing for anyone who is a believer and it will guide such people to the right path and will heal their diseases of the heart including doubt, hypocrisy, misgiving, etc. However, it is, at the same time, a doom and blindness to those who do not believe and causes them not to be able to recognize the right path from astray"(9).

The author of "Mama's Al-Bayan" also makes the following remarks regarding the above-mentioned verse:

"The holy Quran is a healing for the people in a number of ways:

- 1-Through its guidance and advices, it eliminates the blindness of the heart, ignorance, and the consternation of doubt.
- 2-It is composed of such a precise order and a miraculous eloquence that it easily proves the Prophet's claim that it is indeed the words of God and thus it heals the ignorance, doubt, and insensitivity of beliefs in the people.
- 3-People consecrate to the Quran and read it to solve the problems and remove diseases and God wards off many unpleasant occurrences because of it and based on his own goodwill"(10).

The author of the Tafsire-Jame' has also made similar remarks. However, his remarks are different from those mentioned above in that he has emphasized on the healing power of Quran for the physical illnesses. He has also mentioned the following among the reasons why the holy Quran is a healing for humans:

"... Four: it is a healing for physical diseases, as Sheik Sadouq in his book "Amaali"quoted the Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) remarks in this regard: "when someone faced with an ill person, he should read the Surah Al-Fatiha seven times on his brow; if he does not heal read it up to seventy times. I guarantee his healing and the restoration of his health if you do this"(10).

Bin Masoud has also said in this regard:

"Once I was suffering from sore eyes, so I went to the Messenger of God (God bless him and his family) and asked him to pray for my

eyes to be healed. He said: "keep looking at the Quran persistently, I myself learned to do this from Gabriel when I had sore eyes and I know that God has placed the felicity of this world and that of the hereafter all in the Quran"(11).

The late Kuleini has transmitted 19 narrations in his book Kaafi (12) in a separate chapter named "the reason for Ailments and diseases". In his book Makarem Al-Akhlaaq (13), Tabarsi has also dedicated a whole chapter named "Diseases and treatments and some related issues" to a large number of narrations about the treatment of various diseases and has also allocated another chapter called "Healing with the Quran" about the blessings and the healing powers of the Quran in which he has transmitted a number of narrations about the healing effects of some of the Quranic chapters and verses. Other Shiite traditionalists such as Majlesi have also discussed the issue of healing with the Quran in their books. What is certain, thus, is that a considerable number of narrations exist in our Tradition references with regard to the issue of healing, including the ones containing amulets, talismans, recommendations, prayers, invocations and the ones which discuss the healing effects of some Quranic chapters or verses on different physical, mental and psychological diseases. These narrations are truly a great reserve for us for the healing of diseases of various kinds. Moreover, the advances in modern medicine must never alter our view regarding these narrations and traditions and we must never take them as archaic or obsolete medical procedures of a thousand years ago. If we grasp the profound knowledge in these narrations then we will clearly understand that they have nothing against the modern medicine and those of them which have been proven to be said by the Prophet or the infallible Imams are in effect eternal, everlasting prescriptions for the treatment of the diseases and the restoration of health and such prescriptions are never outdated. These are the narrations which, as far as the man plunges into the deep ocean of science and industry, he will always and forever need them in all areas.

The healing of physical diseases

The holy Quran's healing of physical illnesses has been subject to different interpretations and justifications, some of which are as follows:

1. Some have believed that in the holy verse of

"We send down (stage by stage) in the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss." (14) The term healing refers to both physical and mental illnesses and we have no right to restrict the Quran only to the healing of the diseases of hearts, souls and minds. It is possible that in the future the healing effects of the Quran on physical illnesses also be discovered and the best healing prescriptions for physical diseases be derived from the Quran.

2. Some others have claimed that reverting to the Quran as a means of healing is only justifiable when the modern medicine is exhausted without any results:

"We seek refuge in the Quran for the healing of the physical illnesses only when all the attempts of the modern medicine for curing such diseases have been futile and it is called an incurable disease by the modern medicine. It does not mean that it works like a medicine. If this was true, then the Quran would only have the equal value of medicine. Rather, it should be mentioned that the Quran is used to heal physical diseases when there are no physicians and medicine or that even if there are, they have been ineffective" (15).

It means that the healing of the Quran is in contrast with that of the modern medical treatments; that is to say that we can only hope to use the healing power of the Quran for the physical illnesses when the medical treatments of modern medicine have been exhausted to treat the disease. However, in fact, it is not true. The healing of the Quran and the modern medicine are along with each other. There is no contradiction between pursuing medical treatments of a physician on the one hand and seeking blessing from the Quran and healing from God on the other. When we visit a doctor for medical treatments and seek healing from God and his holy book at the same time, it means that we ask God to place our healing along with the medical treatment of the

doctors, which are means through which God restores our health and heals us. This way we would ask God to make the treatments effective as they all work according to his will. It is always possible that the medicine we use have destructive effects or that the doctors make a mistake in their diagnosis; therefore we have to believe that the real healing comes from God and what we do are means through which he restores our health. In other words, a person who, in addition to pursuing modern medical treatments, appeals to God through prayers and the Quran, will enhance the effect of the medical treatments and paves the way for his healing.

The essence of healing with and seeking blessing from the Quran is only praying and supplication to God. Praying has many types and seeking healing with the Quran can be one of them. Allameh Tabatabaei has accepted this view in general and has mentioned that:

Said to be a more general healing in verse of spiritual healing diseases ... and healing physical diseases by use the signs of holy Quran reading and writing this (9).

Just as reading a verse or a chapter of the Quran for the purpose of healing of a disease is a kind of prayer, writing verses of the Quran on a plate and then washing them off and making a sick person drink that water for the purpose of healing the patient is also a kind of prayer and supplication to God. This is because the essence of healing is prayer and supplication to God. Therefore, all amulets, talismans, and the writing of Quranic verses or chapters on a plate and then washing them off and making a sick person drink that water are all examples of prayers, on the condition that they have really been taught by the Prophet or the infallible Imams. The true essence of prayer is asking God, with full attention, to grant us our needs, as God has also confirmed this: "Say: My Lord would not care about you except for your imploring. But you have denied, so it will be your destiny" (16). Therefore, by praying to God, we ask the only one in the world who has the utmost power to do whatever he wills and who is also knowledgeable and almighty to help us and grant us the healing of our physical and mental diseases.

3. Some others believe that the healing of the Quran for the physical illnesses is relevant to the canonization of its laws. These lifestyle rules include the laws of forbidden, allowed and obligatory in economic, political, education, family etc. through specifying pure and healthy foods which are safe to eat as well as impure foods and drinks which are forbidden to be used because of being harmful to the body or soul or both. These rules and laws will ultimately lead the believers, who seriously take the advice of the Quran, to be healthy and not to be inflicted with a whole number of mental and physical illnesses (8).

Clearly, the philosophy behind these Divine laws is to keep mankind out of harm's way in both personal and social scales and to guarantee their welfare in this world and in the hereafter; this view is in line with seeking the blessing and healing for physical illnesses with the Quran for, as it was discussed above, the true essence of seeking heal is praying and supplication to God and praying is highly advised and emphasized by the Quran.

Discussion & Conclusion

There is a consensus among the Quranic exegetes regarding the healing effects of the Quran on the mental diseases and moral corruptions. The healing of the Quran with regard to physical illnesses is done through its laws for the people's lifestyle and its recommendations and guidance. Moreover, since seeking healing and treatment of the diseases with the Quran is an instance of praying, it is very effective in enhancing the effects of the medical treatments and preventing undesirable side effects of such treatments. It must be noted that medicine does not necessarily lead to healing. Mankind has learned, to some extent, about medicine with his limited knowledge, but he has never claimed to have found the ultimate treatment that would lead to healing. For healing, one must seek medical treatments with physicians as well as praying to God for healing at the same time. These two issues are not in contrast with each other; rather, they complement each other and none can replace the other. Finally,

the holy Quran will be the healing if one adheres to its every order and act according to its teachings and recommendations.

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