

Fit mind in a fit body: Islamic recipes

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ABSTRACT

Background: The goal of the Islamic thoughts, teachings and practices is to attain and maintain a fit mind in a fit body. Islam opposes the Cartesian dualism, which was the view that the mind and body exist independently. Rather, Islam regards human being as a sacred entity where the mind and body interact. Research in this area abounds in both the Muslim and Western countries but not in Nigeria with widespread ignorance, misconception and atimes hostility towards the concepts and practice of Islam within the general context of health care and mental illness in particular. It is within this context that this paper described in details the concept of mental health and wellbeing and highlights the contributions of Islam and Muslims to the healing, care and management of people with mental health challenges.

Methodology: Searches on literature on the topic from library desk and online (internet based) publications were conducted. The review of such extant literature on the topic formed the theoretical framework of the paper.

Results: The paper highlights the historical development of mental health care among Muslims and their contributions to these fields as well as the Islamic understanding of the causation, prevention and treatment of mental disorders. The paper provides people, especially those who are not familiar with Islamic values, with the therapeutic methods and techniques that are in line with Islamic values.

Conclusion: Islam is full of recipes for the numerous psychiatric ailments confronting humanity today. Islamic healing methods and principles can be beneficial in the treatment and healing of mentally-ill people through the incorporation of these Islamic methods.

Key words: mental disorders, mental health care, Islamic healing methods

Introduction

The goal of Islamic teachings and practices is to attain and maintain a fit mind in a fit body. Islam opposes the Cartesian dualism, which in its simplest form, is the view that the mind and body exist independently. Rather, Islam regards human being as a sacred entity where the mind and body interact and depend on each other. Thus, Islam teaches about the purification of the body (*at-Tah rah*) in as much as it emphasizes the purification of the

soul (*Tazkiyah al-Nafs*) because the health and wellbeing of both is paramount to Islam.

Research on Islam, mental health and general medicine has been growing over the years in both the Muslim and western countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and the United States. In Nigeria, there is still widespread ignorance, misconception and hostility over the concepts and practice of Islam within the general context of medicine, health care and particularly mental illness. It is within this

context that this paper described in details the concept of mental health and wellbeing and highlights the contributions of Islam and Muslims to the healing, care and management of individuals with mental health challenges.

Materials and methods:

Searches on literature on the topic from library desk and online (internet based) publications were conducted. The review of such extant literature on the topic formed the theoretical framework and thrust of this paper's findings described under the results.

Results

Understanding mental health and ill-health

Mental health can be conceptualized as a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal challenges of life, work productively and fruitfully, relate harmoniously within a group, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.¹ According to Sadock and Sadock², adequate mental health entails successful performance of mental functions in terms of thought, mood, emotions, cognitions, beliefs and behaviour resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with others, ability to adapt to change and to cope with adversity.

Mental ill-health, on the other hand has been defined as illness with psychological or behavioural manifestations, sometimes

accompanied by physical manifestations, but with abnormalities in thoughts, cognition, sensory perceptions, beliefs and behaviour³. Mental health problems can be said to exist whenever there is a disruption in functioning in relation to self, group and environment; and when this is accompanied by significant impairment of the process of thinking, feeling or volition, a disorder or an illness is said to exist.³

Mental disorders can be categorized broadly into: major and minor mental disorders.^{2,4} Major mental disorders often referred to as psychoses, include those illnesses with severe disturbance of thinking and behaviour, and characterized by loss of touch with reality and a lack of personal appreciation of abnormality of own behaviour. These disorders may occur in association with (organic) or without (functional) demonstrable disturbance of brain structure, physiology or chemistry. Minor mental disorders, on the other hand otherwise called neuroses, are characterized by mild to moderate disturbance of mental processes that may be equally disabling but without loss of touch with reality, and there is usually some degree of personal appreciation of the problem. There is however a third group known as the 'worried well' and it refers to people with non-diagnosable illness, but nevertheless have relationship problems or lack self-fulfilment.⁵ They are, however, often highly motivated to be helped and may

improve considerably with professional assistance.

The symptoms of mental ill-health may include any disturbances of mood, thinking, perception and judgement, appearances, speech and behaviours. Sometimes it may involve memory problems and poor concentration and attention. Mental ill-health has far-reaching effects on the individual, significant others (relatives, neighbours) and the society at large. The effects on the individual include:

1. Personal pains and sufferings experienced by the individual as a direct result of the symptoms of the illness and the reactions of the society.
2. Inabilities and limitations in performing social roles and functions as a result of impairments of feelings, thinking and volition. It has been estimated that up to 40% of all adult disabilities are as a result of mental ill-health.
3. Various social disadvantages (handicaps) experienced by the individual as a result of personal limitations of the illness and societal reactions which may be demonstrated in various degree of stigmatizations including social exclusions and discriminations against the sufferer. The societal reactions and attitudes are often related to various negative

cultural beliefs and inadequate knowledge about mental illness and its causes.

In addition to the above, individual effects of mental ill-health and its associated disabilities as well as its management often constitute a huge burden of physical, emotional, economic and social dimensions to family members of sufferers as well as immediate society. The government is not spared of the negative impacts of mental illness. Mild to moderate mental health dysfunctions impair human productivity at work, home or community.

Overview of Islam and mental healthcare

In Islam, religion and medicine are not mutually exclusive as Islam is all encompassing. Hence, the life of any Muslim should be patterned after the *Shar'ah* from moment of birth till the time of death.^{6,7} For this reason, the *Shar'ah* teaches Muslims the principles guiding medical and healthcare practices in other that they be in conformity with the divine path. Also, the encompassing nature of the *Shar'ah* informs the Islamic command that Muslims must embrace the acquisition of scientific, medical, technological and other non-revealed branches of knowledge as a religious obligation as can be deduced from many passages in the Qur'an such as (Chapter 96:1–5; 3:190–91; 10:1; 12:1; 13:1; 15:1; and 30:20–25).⁸ These passages show that both revealed and human acquired knowledge must

be taken and understood together for humanity to live a healthy and wholesome life on earth. As it has been observed, in the case of ibn Sanyal, that “the prophet can be regarded as having employed what we now consider the prerogatives of experimental psychology, psychiatry, and other sciences related to the study of human nature.”⁹

Bearing in mind the necessity for Muslims to stick to the above pioneering venture of the Prophet in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, especially in the area of medical sciences, it is no wonder that Muslim scholars served as the precursors and torchbearers of the scientific knowledge that culminated in today’s modern civilisation. The remarkable contributions made by Muslims to scientific knowledge in general and the medical sciences in particular during the medieval period, as noted by Bernard Lewis,⁹ shook Europe out of its centuries-long slumber. According to Dunlop⁹, these scholars’ contributions to modern education began appearing in Europe during the tenth century, and by the thirteenth century their works in almost all branches of knowledge could be found throughout Europe. These Muslim scholars were known as wise men because they were truly universal scholars who mastered the medical, physical, mathematical and revealed sciences.⁹ However, most of their Islamic psychiatric treatment ethos, methods and practices were

unknown to many psychiatric clinicians and practitioners of today.

Contrary to the view of Jamie Wood that the Islamic paradigm on mental illness is the manifestation of the system of therapy proposed by Hippocrates through Galen that is based on the four cardinal humours of ‘blood, black bile, yellow bile, and phlegm’ that relate to the four elements of nature: air, earth, fire and water.¹⁰ Rather, the Islamic perspectives of mental illness are firmly placed within invocations contained in the Qur’an and prophetic *Sunnah* (teachings and practices of prophet Muhammad (SAW)), which form the basis of the Islamic system of therapy, which is popularly known as El-Gilani Methodology (EGM) developed by Mubarik Gilani.¹¹ The fact that medieval Islamic scholars during the golden era of Islamic civilization were great authorities on ancient Greek, Indian, Persian and Egyptian sciences does not negate the Islamic roots of Islamic medicine, neuropsychiatry, philosophy and theology etc.⁹

Muslims do not believe that mental illnesses are incurable because they are from demons or other super-natural causes. Islam teaches that there is a cure for every ailment as is authentically related that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) declares that “for every disease, there is a medicine and if the medicine is applied, he becomes cured by

permission of Allah.”¹² He (SAW) has also been reported to have said “Allah sent no disease for which he sent no cure.”¹¹ Therefore, there is no disease except that Allah has sent down a cure even as he has sent down the disease.

Muslim scholars in line with the above Prophetic traditions rejected such untreatability of psychiatric illness and provided descriptions and treatments for mental health conditions like psychosis, mania and depression. They also viewed mental disorders as conditions that were physiologically based and treatable. Al-Majisi, a forerunner of Ibn al-Husayn ibn Abdullah ibn-Sina (980-1030), known to the west as Avicenna, for example in his ‘royal book’, *Kitab al-Malak*, considers different mental conditions and dealt with the treatment and management of mental illness through complimentary nutrition comparable with contemporary current alternative therapies as well as what might be considered early Arabic pharmacology.¹³ Ibn-Sina, widely regarded as the founder of modern medicine due to his celebrated work, *al-Qanun fi al-Tibb* or the canon of medicine, rejected the notion that mental illnesses are incurable and provided descriptions and treatments for such conditions as mania and depression and viewed mental disorders as results from the disturbances in bodily conditions and mood. For linking changes in

mental state to changes in the body, he was considered a pioneer in the field of psychosomatic medicine.¹³⁻¹⁵

In the Qur’an, there are many verses in support of seeking treatment or curing of diseases. These verses include Qur’an, Chapter 16: 68-69.⁸ According to Sayyid Qutb, the healing powers of honey refer to both physical and chemical processes.¹⁶ The Islamic dietary regulations, fasting laws and the general rules for hygiene and burial are also enshrined to safeguard the sound health of Muslims over the ages.

Therefore, during the golden era of Islamic civilization, the Islamic scholars did not limit their contributions to general medicine but also focussed on the study of the concept of psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy, and their relationship to mental health. Abu Bakr Muhammad Zakariyyah al-Razi (865 – 925), known as Rhazes in the west wrote extensively on the diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses. In fact, he is regarded as the first physician to write on mental illness and the methods of psychotherapy. His works entitled “*Kitab al-Mansur*” and “*Kitab al-Haw*” focus on the definition and symptoms of mental health and provide descriptions and treatments for mental illnesses.’ This led to his establishment of the first psychiatric section in the world while he was chief physician of Baghdad hospital in Iraq. By that

achievement al-R z became one of the greatest Islamic physicians who pioneered the consideration of mental disorders and disturbances as medical conditions that should be treated by using psychotherapy and psychiatric treatments.^{13,14}

Methods of Islamic healing for mental challenges

In treating mental ailments, Islam proffers different methods that are broadly classified into two: spiritual and non-spiritual (i.e. psychiatric) therapies depending on the causation. It is instructive that these two therapies can serve as both preventive and curative methods.

If on the one hand, the source of the mental disorders/symptoms arose from physical, emotional, psychological and socioeconomic disorders, then the treatment will be psychiatric or psychological intervention. For such preventable disorders that resulted from the consumption of psychoactive drugs (alcohol and other drugs of abuse) Islam has prohibited the consumption of such psychoactive substances when Allah commands that: “do not throw yourselves into destruction with our own hands and wealth” (Qur’an 2:195).⁸

If on the other hand, the mental symptoms are as a result of demonic possession, which flows mainly from human encounter with the

jinn or their satanic agents, the treatment will be spiritual intervention i.e. spiritual healing methods in Islam shall be entertained and will be discussed below. The encounter with demonic forces can occur in houses, toilets, on the roads and market places, through the devilish gaze, talisman, witchcraft or any other forms of spiritual attacks. The demonic causes of mental symptoms have been explained by the Prophet (SAW) in the Sunnah. The Prophet (SAW) stated that: “the eye is true and if anything were to supersede destiny, the eye would have superseded it.”¹² He also explained that: “a good number of those who die in my community in line with the decree and command of Allah are as a result of the eye.”¹² The reality of demonic possession is confirmed by Allah in the following words: “those who eat *rib* (usury) will not stand (on the day of resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by (Satan) leading him to insanity” (Quran, 2:275).⁸

Examples of demonic possession are contained in the Sunnah where the Prophet (SAW) was reported to have cured many victims of their spiritual ailments that presented with mental symptoms. For instance, J bir ibn Abdullah narrated that during the trip of the battle of Riq ’, a woman brought her son to the Prophet who has been possessed by the devil. The Prophet then spat in the mouth of the boy and commanded the

enemy of Allah to leave three times. He then informed the woman that her son was now cured.¹⁷ Therefore, an occultic invocation/incantation, look or gaze of Satan and his allies may cause symptoms that looks like mental disorder on their victim. Hence, both the spiritual and psychiatric therapies are employed according to Islamic teachings and the intensity of each of this therapy varies according to the causation.

Islam and the psychotherapeutic method of bonding with Allah

To live a life devoid of demonic possession and diabolical machination and to maintain mental and spiritual health as well as avoid mental and spiritual illness, a person must be in close communion with Allah. According to Islamic belief, the greatest source of mental distress is spiritual, which entails mindful separation of the physical human body from its spiritual source and creator, Allah. Therefore, mental health can be achieved and distress/illness can be prevented first and foremost through a healthy attachment to Allah. In line with the divine scheme, whosoever is afflicted by spiritual distress and mental disturbance must reattach himself or herself to Allah and stick to his oneness. The person can therefore not contemplate or seek any form of healing that contains shirk (polytheism). This is clear from the directive of the prophet when he suffered some

spiritual affliction and he stated that: “place your invocation on me for there is no harm in invocation if it is devoid of shirk.”¹² And when the patient attaches himself or herself to Allah, He (SWT) promised that: “...He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, and then he will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allah has set a measure for all things” (Qur’an 65:3).⁸

This Islamic belief of acquiring mental health through a healthy attachment to Allah is analogous to the theory of a child’s emotional attachment to the mother during the early years propounded by John Bowlby. Bowlby was engaged by the world health organization to contribute a study on the mental health aspects of homeless children in post-war Europe. According to him, disrupted emotional relationships during early childhood could have adverse effects on the mental health of children based on a review of the evidence pointing to a causal connection between a child’s secure attachment with the mother and its mental health, self-esteem and general psychological development.¹⁸ Thus, as argued by Sabry and Vohra,¹⁹ a Muslim having a “healthy attachment” to Allah should improve not only the mental health of delinquent and sociopathic children but also to a better psychological development and more robust mental wellbeing. This is because

attachment to Allah which is being part of a larger purpose than oneself in life is superior than the more close focus of microscopic bonding to the mother. This is supported by some studies that have found that being religious increases patients' satisfaction and adherence to treatment.^{20,21} A way of bonding with Allah is through *Salat*. Thus *Salat* serves more than a ritual practice but also as a healing method by way of meditation, remembrance, supplication and attachment with Allah who has commanded: "O ye who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere" (Qur'an 2: 153).⁸

Islam and the psychotherapeutic method of bonding with the family

As the above study of Bowlby has shown, there is a causal connection between a child's secure attachment with the mother and its over-all mental, psychological and general wellbeing. For this and many other reasons, the family as the smallest unit of the society is considered by Islam an important socio-cultural component, which has perhaps the greatest impact on personality development and a potential factor in the prevention of different psychiatric disorders. The findings of Bowlby (1952),¹⁸ which shows that the permanent loss of parents (especially mothers) or parental figures during childhood has been found to contribute to the

vulnerability of children to different forms of psychiatric disturbances such as anger, anxiety and depression, is a proof that it is worthwhile to enforce the role of the family in the upbringing of children. Islam therefore ensures that Muslim individual grow up under ideal family conditions for the development of a healthy life where they can realize their potentialities in contrast to the modern society.

Contrary to the prevailing permissive sexual orientation, which is promoting downward social values that lead to broken families, increased divorce rates and number of unwed mothers and single parent families who have little or no time for children, Islam legislates that "the mothers shall give suck to their children for two whole years, (that is) for those (parents) who desire to complete the term of suckling" and "if they both decide on weaning, by mutual consent, after due consultation, there is no sin on them" (Qur'an 2: 233).⁸ Therefore, Islamic parental care and attention can help cure drug abuse and haram sexual activities rampant today among adolescents and young adults that grow in the modern environment where both parents or the mother in particular are missing. This destruction of the family setup is a key factor in the parent/child conflict, loneliness, guilt, loss of self-esteem, which has led to the variety of pathological disorders the modern society is witnessing today. In Islam, the

family is therefore a technique not only to help prevent these challenges but to also aid the cure for these pathological disorders after they occur through supporting the patients in his treatment compliance and spiritual therapy boosting.

The Qur'an as a psychotherapeutic method

Another method of curing as well as preventing psychological disorders in Islam is recitation of Islamic invocations. This is more than the use of music as a form of therapy in modern treatment of mental illness. Regarding the use of music in Islamic treatment of mental illnesses, it is generally considered forbidden as a therapeutic method. As far as close to musical therapeutic need is concerned, mental illnesses can be treated by making accessible to patients the twenty-first-century Qur'an recitation techniques. This approach is utilized today by the psychiatric research center of Shahar Hospital, Taif, Saudi Arabia which uses the standardized and scientifically tested system of the Islamic invocations as well as the projection of the visual image of the personal names of Almighty God, Allah, and his holy last messenger, Muhammad (SAW) to heal diseases of the mind, body and soul.

The Shahar Hospital system further popularised the El-Gilani Methodology (EGM) where patients suffering from schizophrenia, chronic depression, epilepsy,

insomnia, nightmares, etc. were completely healed, removing all doubts about Islamic therapy.¹¹ This EGM is based on numerous Islamic invocations that have been recommended by the prophet (SAW) for the psychiatric treatment of psychological disorders. According to him, this Islamic sound therapy brings happiness and comfort to the mentally challenged.

Meditation based on concentrating on essence of Allah to the exclusion of all other ideas or objects is another potent Islamic therapy that brings relaxation and relief. The recitation of Islamic invocations, meditation about Allah and the words of remembrance have been empirically confirmed to help in stress reduction/elimination, mental healing and exorcism of the victims of demonic possession by the jinn.^{14,21} This same method has been conceptualized as *ruqyotherapy* and *ruqyoprophylaxis* by Opeewe (2006).²³

The using of herbs as a method of healing

The use of medicinal plants and herbal oil forms a very important part of Islamic healing methods in the prevention, treatment and management of mental disorders. The use of medicinal plants and herbal oil in the Islamic prescription for the prevention, treatment and management of mental symptoms also aids the psychiatric medication used by Muslim patients during fasting periods, especially in the month of Ramadan as herbal dosages are

easily adjustable in accordance with the timings of the Muslim fasting and eating times.

In facilitating medication using medicinal plants and oils, Ibn Sīnā has recorded over 800 medicinal plants and oils that can be used in the treatment of mental illness.¹³ He was the first to perfect the distilling of oils from plants, which is used today to make concentrated forms of aromatherapy oils. In the thirteenth century, the Muslim physician al-Samarqandī also wrote on the use of herbs and flowers as forms of aromatherapy. This is in line with the prescription of healing herbs by the prophet (SAW) in the treatment of sickness in general and mental illness in particular. Examples of such medicinal plants and oils distilled from them include the leaf of the Lote tree, Olive blessed oil, the aromatic plant, the black seed, the emotional stabilizer, honey, dates and Zamzam water.²² The leaf of the Lote tree has been recommended by the prophet for its healing power in impotency.^{8,22}

About the black seed, the Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said: “Verily, the black seed is a cure for every disease except annihilation.” When asked what is annihilation? He replied: “death”.¹² About the healing capacity of dates, grapes and honey, Allah has said “and from the fruits of date-palms and grapes, you derive strong drinks and a goodly provision ...” there comes forth

from your bellies, a drink of varying colours wherein is healing for men.” (Qur’an 16: 67-69).⁸ The Prophet (SAW) was reported to have said that “whosoever eats seven wet dates in the morning would not be harmed by any poison or sorcery on that day.” (al-Bukhārī). Finally, the Zamzam water which “cures all diseases except what Allah wills” is herbal miracle water and has remained a source of healing for numerous illnesses including demonic possession.²²

Using of Islamic admonitions as psychotherapy

Islamic admonition plays an important role in helping Muslims in both prevention and treatment of depression. When Muslims experience calamities, tribulations and other disturbing life episodes, they are taught and groomed to resist them with positive thoughts and actions if possible, seek divine help from Allah and professional help if the case is changeable and corrective, like any other challenge within human capacity.

Islam encourages Muslims to stay hopeful in the face of any calamity or tribulation as happened to Prophet Ya‘qūb (ASW) whom two out of his 11 sons were missing and yet says to the remaining sons: “Oh my sons! Go you and enquire about Yusuf (Joseph) and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah's mercy. Certainly, no one despairs of Allah's mercy, except the people who disbelieve”

(Qur'an 12: 87).⁸ Having such assurance, Allah says: "Verily, along with every hardship is relief. Verily, along with every hardship is relief (i.e. there is one hardship with two reliefs, so one hardship cannot overcome two reliefs)" (Qur'an 94: 5-6).⁸

To counter depressive and hopeless thoughts, Islam has prohibited drugs, alcohol and all substance that can aid suicidal feelings and mental/emotional instability. Instead of seeking succour in these deadly and harmful substances, Muslims are taught to engage in the doing of good such as remembrance of Allah in times of suffering and pain. In the words of Allah, "and spend in the cause of Allah and do not throw yourselves into destruction (by not spending in the cause of Allah), and do well. Truly, Allah loves the good-doers" (Qur'an 2: 195).⁸ Islam also teaches that all matters of life, death, joy, and happiness are in the hands of Allah and that any loss or deprivation is as a matter of fact, a test of human patience and trust in his wisdom and mercy. In this regards, Allah states: "O you who believe! Seek help in patience and the prayer. Truly! Allah is with the patient. And say not of those who are killed in the way of Allah, "they are dead." Nay, they are living, but you perceive (it) not. And certainly, we shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tiding to the patient. Who, when afflicted with calamity,

say: "truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to him we shall return." They are those on whom are the blessings and forgiveness from their lord, and (they are those who receive his) mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones" (Qur'an 2: 153-157).⁸

While commenting on the statement "to Allah we belong and truly, to him we shall return," the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) says "no person suffers any anxiety or grief, and says this supplication but Allah will take away his sorrow and grief, and give him in their stead joy. As a way of protecting Muslims from the suicidal feelings and mental/emotional instability that may occur at the time of grief, it is permissible to cry and express grief over the death of a loved one. For instance, when the Prophet's son Ibrahim, died, the Prophet said: "we are very sad for your death, O Ibrahim."¹² However, during this crying to wipe away grief, Muslims must shun negative thoughts such as the questions "why me?", "where is Allah when I needed him?" And "who can now help me?" Such questions weaken our faith in Allah and negate the Prophetic statement that "no Muslim is struck with an affliction and then says *istirj*' (truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to him we shall return) when the affliction strikes," and further says, "O Allah! Reward me for my loss and give me what is better than it,' but Allah will do just that."¹²

In addition, as part of our belief that Allah is always available to assist us once we place our trust in him, as He alone is able to do all things, is to reflect over blessings upon us and focus on what we have and not on what we have lost (cf. cognitive restructuring). The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was reported to have said, “look at those who are less fortunate than yourselves, not at those who are better off than yourselves, so that you will not belittle the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon you.” This is the Islamic way of cognitive restructuring to help Muslims to abstain from regret over sad and unfortunate things that have happened, which cannot be changed and to stop worrying about the future. The person should think only about the present, focusing his energy on doing his best today, because this is what results in perfect work, and helps him to forget his worries and regrets and as the prophet has said: ‘the strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, and both are good. Pay attention to that which could benefit you, seek the help of Allah and do not feel incapacitated. If anything befalls you, do not say, “if only I had done such-and-such, such a thing would have happened.” Say instead, “it is the decree of Allah, and what he wills, he does,” for saying “if only...” opens the way for Satan.’¹²

Opening the door to these disturbing and depressive ruminative thoughts might be the

machinations of satanic agents from among men and jinn who whisper into our minds and hearts. Allah informs us of this when he says: “then Satan whispered suggestions to them both in order to uncover that which was hidden from them of their private parts (before); he said: “your Lord did not forbid you this tree save that you should become angels or become of the immortals” (Qur’an 7: 20).⁸ Allah has also said. Say: ‘I seek refuge with (Allah) the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the God of mankind, from the evil of the whisperer (devil who whispers evil in the hearts of men) who withdraws (from his whispering in one’s heart after one remembers Allah from the jinn and men” (Qur’an 114: 1-6).⁸ To counter these thoughts and preventing one from becoming spiritually, mentally, emotionally, psychologically, and socially incapacitated, it has been recommended that we “seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the outcast. Moreover the Prophet (SAW) has said “Allah most high has forgiven the evil thoughts that arise in the hearts of the people of my nation until one acts upon them or talks about them.”¹²

Discussion

Though this paper is a theoretical review, the findings are non-the-less apt and very instructive. It has highlighted the Islamic recipe to address mental health challenges. But, unfortunately for present day Muslims,

many of these Islamic values, solutions and panacea to human sufferings are only on pages of Islamic history and archives of the Muslim museums. The areas of contention, in the context of general health care system includes whether the western paradigm to health care and management are superior to Islamic paradigm or whether the Islamic perspectives regarding general medicine and mental health in particular are even sound. Muslim health professionals need to come out and prove that the Islamic paradigm of health care is superior, and in fact that the so called western paradigm has its basis in Islam.

Many mental health clinicians and other medical practitioners have the view that some practising Muslims are negatively affected by Islamic traditions and therefore, these Islamic practices pose risks to their health, including mental health. This might be a share misunderstanding for which they need to be educated about Islam and its systems. The Islamic dietary regulations prohibit the use of medications at variance with Islamic ethos in the treatment of illnesses, including mental illnesses. For example, the presence of ingredients derived from pork-products-medications as well as alcohol is totally forbidden in Islam and Muslim patients aware of its composition in their medications should not only stop taking such medications but should as a matter of religious obligation seek the treatment and management of the health

challenges from other clinicians and psychiatrists in order to avoid relapse of symptoms. In the same vein, group therapy as practiced in western settings often conflicts with a number of Islamic values. For instance, it is prohibited to share personal details in group settings, where strangers, members of the opposite gender and conflicting religions are present. However, the functions of such groups may be enhanced if they are composed of family members, members of the same gender and religion.²⁴⁻²⁷ Johasen²⁸ has posited that non-Muslim doctors should try and respect this sensitivity to avoid poor doctor-patient relationship. This is part of the ethical responsibility of clinicians and psychiatrists in embracing the psychosocial model to seek the healing of their Muslim patients from suitably qualified Islamic approved and recommended plants and oils distilled just as they are expected. And to seek help from Muslim religious experts or Imams and Muslim leaders to deal with the psychological problems of their Muslim patients.²⁸

Finally, it is very instructive for health professionals to take heed from the findings of this review. The role of having a healthy Muslim Ummah with fit mind in fit body is all ours. In line with this, we need more medical education and training of Muslim health practitioners. Muslims need to involve themselves in evidenced based practice with

Islamic input, and scientific researches on Islamic values.

Conclusion

Islam is full of recipes for the numerous psychiatric ailments confronting humanity today. Islamic healing methods can be beneficial in the treatment and healing of mentally ill people through the adoption, adaptation and incorporation of Islamic methods that facilitate medication use and adherence. By employing Islamic methods in the treatment of mental challenges, psychiatrists, mental health clinicians and practitioners can resolve a lot of mental health issues particularly those revolving round social, professional, educational, marital and family problems. This Islamic approach has also proven to be effective in motivation-enhanced psychotherapy as patients' mental and emotional stability can be aided through the enhancement of their relationship with God. Islam highlights the importance of community and accords a very important role to religious teachings, culture, and the family in the treatment of mental illness.

This reviewed paper has provided both the general public, mental health clinicians and psychiatrists, especially those who are not familiar with Islamic values with therapeutic methods and techniques that are in line with Islamic values. The onus lies on all holistic health professionals to incorporate and project

the Islamic values into their practice. Finally it is recommended that more researches in needed in these areas to promote the best way to implement the Islamic system of healing at both the individual and policy levels.

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