

Spiritual medicine in the multi perspective of religion

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ABSTRACT

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Spiritual healing, also known as healing through prayer and meditation, has been widely studied by various scholars from different religions including Islam, Hindu, Buddhism, and Christianity. The term spiritual medicine is increasingly popular with increasing mental disorders, degenerative diseases, metabolic, cancer and social illness such as drug abuse. Religions of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity have almost the same tradition in the spiritual aspect to create the purity of self and inner peace through the practice of worship or prayer based on spiritual meditation. This article explained about the application of spiritual medicine which is mostly done to reduce stress and anxiety due to an illness suffered by the patient. Spiritual medicine is commonly used for feeling at peace, study self-control, anger management, empathy, affection, calmness, and also to sharpen brain activity and increase well being. Spirituality refers to the process of improvement done with the aim to restore humans to the true figure as a God creation and have the correct perception about the true image of god based on the holy book of the Qur'an, Torah, gospel and the main figure of world religions such as the Buddha and prophet of Muhammad. All religions teach the need to ask the Creator to be healthy, prosperous and free from the sufferings of illness. The benefits of spiritual medicine depend on the quality, intensity and frequency or quantity of practices or methods that are practiced by each religious believer.

Penyembuhan secara spiritual yang dikenal juga dengan penyembuhan melalui doa dan meditasi telah mulai banyak diteliti oleh berbagai ahli dari berbagai agama baik Islam, Hindu Budha dan Kristen. Istilah kedokteran spiritual (spiritual medicine) semakin populer dengan semakin banyaknya gangguan jiwa, penyakit degeneratif, metabolik, kanker dan penyakit sosial seperti penyalahgunaan obat. Agama Islam, Hindu, Budha dan Kristen memiliki tradisi yang hampir sama dalam aspek spiritual untuk menciptakan kesucian diri dan ketenangan batin melalui praktek ibadah atau doa yang berbasis pada meditasi spiritual. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk memaparkan aplikasi spiritual medicine yang banyak dilakukan untuk mengurangi stres dan kecemasan akibat penyakit yang diderita pasien. Penyembuhan secara spiritual umumnya digunakan untuk membangun kedamaian, belajar pengontrolan diri, manajemen marah, empati, kasih sayang, ketenangan, dan juga untuk menajamkan aktivitas otak serta meningkatkan kesejahteraan. Spiritualitas diartikan proses perbaikan yang dilakukan dengan tujuan untuk mengembalikan manusia pada sosok sejatinya sebagai makhluk yang bertuhan dan memiliki persepsi yang benar tentang citra tuhan yang sebenarnya berbasis kitab suci alquran, taurat, injil dan para tokoh utama agama dunia seperti sang Budha dan Nabi Muhammad. Semua agama mengajarkan perlunya memohon kepada sang Pencipta

untuk sehat, sejahtera dan bebas dari penderitaan penyakit. Manfaat dari penyembuhan spiritual tersebut tergantung pada kualitas, intensitas dan frekuensi atau kuantitas praktek atau metode yang dilakukan oleh masing-masing pemeluk agama.

INTRODUCTION

The spiritual healing, the guidance, the ultimate path to everlasting peace of mind, body and soul purely lies in the heart of redemption and self-awareness. The process is painful but it's worthwhile. To reach the heart of anything, one has to travel from the edge and work all the way in. No doubt sometimes it's the edge, the cliff that shows us the mirror- the path to eternal peace. There have been various practices of meditation for making feeling at peace. For centuries people have tried and succeeded in attaining inner peace. History is full of those who prospered connecting with the creator and experienced joy that others couldn't understand.

From ancient times both civilized and uncivilized worlds have been meditating in different ways. Meditation is a broad term that covers both physical and mental activities and can be classified into three categories: focused attention (FA), open monitoring (OM) and loving-kindness meditation (LKM).^{1,2,3} Different methods are used for making feeling at peace, learn self-control, anger management, empathy, compassion, calmness, and also to sharpen brains activities. Therefore, practitioners established meditation techniques that included behavioral training, reflection, focus, and devotion to preventing egoistic thoughts in individuals.⁴ Many people practice meditation to treat stress-anxiety- related illnesses and also to minimize physical trauma and pain.⁵⁻²⁶

Spiritual meditation is a chief component of many cultures and ethnicities. According to Waaijman, the process of rectification is the traditional meaning of spirituality which "aims to restore true figure of the man, the image of God. To achieve this, the reformation is oriented at a mold, which represents the original shape: the Torah in Judaism, Buddha in Buddhism, Christ in Christianity and Muhammad in Islam."²⁷ The

application of spiritual meditation based on religion in handling a medical problem is called spiritual medicine. The practice of spiritual medicine is mostly done to reduce anxiety and stress condition due to the illness suffered by the patient. The benefit of spiritual medicine is commonly used to study self-control, to learn anger management, and to initiate feeling at peace. The final result of spirituality includes empathy, affection, calmness, and also to sharpen brain activity and increase well-being.

The meaning of spirituality refers to the process of improvement done with the aim to restore humans to the true figure as a God creation. The meaning also is how people have the correct perception about the true image of God based on the holy book of the Qur'an, Torah, Gospel as present in the main figure of world religions such as the Buddha and prophet of Muhammad. Basically, all religions teach the need to ask the Creator to be healthy, prosperous and free from the sufferings of illness although each religion has a different language of the true God.

Religion is the focal place of the most profound sense of being, which demonstrate insisting faith in Allah SWT that makes a basic commitment to our physical health.²⁸ Presently there is an expanding restorative enthusiasm for Muslim religious practices in advancing well-being for the most part supplication and *dhikr* (chanting) as focal religious practices.²⁹ In all the religions, individuals appeal to God for wellbeing and alleviation from sickness.³⁰ All over the world religious practices or customs give an expectation or strength in recuperating or treatment through prayers.³¹ It's reasonable from the correlational reviews that positive connections exist amongst religious and profound practices and wellbeing results on an assortment of various conditions.³²

MEDITATION IN BUDDHISM

The teachings of Buddha were to remove the root cause of all the sufferings and pains. He believed that pain did not come out of anywhere. It was self-inflicted by an undisciplined mind. Buddhism comprised of 'Four Noble Truths' i.e. completed recognition of suffering, completed

abandonment of origin of suffering, completed realization of cessation of suffering, and completed actualization of the path to cessation. Morality being the foundation of buddha-dharma abstains from ten unethical physicals, verbal and mental virtues like killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisiveness, harsh speech, senseless speech, covetousness, harmful intent and wrong view.³³

Dharma is a fundamental concept in Hinduism and Buddhism. Dharma means the way things are i.e. the law of nature and different ways to perceive objects. Knowledge of Dharma is a gist of three focal components of understanding (prajñā/paññā): listening (śruti/sūtra), reflection (cintā), and the one which comes from spiritual practice (bhīvanī).³³ It encloses all the ethical and moral duties to our surroundings. Individuality, cruelty, and other unethical deeds are considered offensive. Living with such moral values upshots self-control, forgiveness, truthfulness, and patience.³⁴ The aim of Buddhism is to put into practice a particular way of living: the 'holy life' or 'spiritual life' (brahma-cariya) that involves training in ethical conduct (sīla) and meditative and contemplative techniques (samādhi). Therefore Buddha taught a system of 'training' (sikkhā) and his disciples may be referred as being 'in training' (sikkhā) or 'not in need of further training' (asikkhā).⁴

Focused attention (FA) is a part of Buddhist meditation. FA requires absolute focus and attention of a person is monitored on a certain object. Clearing one's mind and reaching a point where brain and heart combined with soul solely focus on an object. This exercise results in high level of concentration, dedication, tolerance, and tranquility.¹ A comparative study of Tibetan Buddhist practitioners' showed higher-amplitude sustained electroencephalography (EEG) gamma-band oscillations and long-distance phase synchrony in mental diseases with novices.³⁵ Synchronizations of oscillatory neural discharges play a critical role in enhanced cognitive and affective neural functions. Spiritual meditation with mental training enhances brain

activity.³⁶⁻³⁹

YOGA- A FORM OF HINDU MEDITATION

The history of yoga strongly connects it with Hinduism and proponents claim that yoga is not a religion itself. Yoga contains practical steps in which can benefit people of all religions, as well as those who do not consider themselves religious. The term yoga comes from Sanskrit "yuj" which means to control and unite. This type of meditation connects the body with a soul. It involves physical movements and certain postures help in better understanding of one's own body and connect the yogi/yogini to the divine spiritual world. Behavioral teaching is the main aspect. Good behavior brings out a good soul. Learning to control the desires and restraining from unjust acts (*yama*), disciplining mind (*niyama*), managing the posture (*āsana*), sense-withdrawal (*pratyāhāra*), mastering breath-control (*prānāyāma*), concentrated (*Dhāraṇa*) meditation (*dhyāna*) and absorbed concentration (*Samādhi*).⁴⁰

Yoga is a way of exercise where body postures are designed in such a way that every muscle and nerve cell is stimulated and it has many benefits: it helps in balancing body, proprioception, alleviates depression level and escalates body functions by improving oxygen supply throughout the body.^{41,42} Connecting with soul through meditation provides peace of heart and cures many illnesses caused by anxiety, stress, fatigue, low stamina and produces a state of emotional well-being, increases patience and maximize oxygen supply.^{37,43-46} Patients suffering from fatal cancers have also been seen to have better will power after performing yoga.^{43,47} A study conducted on psychiatric patients suffering from anxiety, tension, depression, aggression, lassitude, and confusion showed improvement in behavior after the first session of yoga.⁴⁸

CHRISTIANITY- THE PEACE OFFERINGS

Christians believe in meditating and seeking spiritual guidance through this practice. Jesus said: 'when two or three pray together in my name, I am there among them.' To mediate one

must have faith in self and Jesus, secondly, to believe in the connection that can establish through chanting prayers, followed by recitation of Holy Scriptures.⁴⁹

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly (Matt 6:5)

Therefore, for good deeds, there shall be a reward and for the sins, there will be sufferings as a reward. To save oneself from hell one resents over the sins and abstains from redoing them. Repentance is a way to get rid of vices within and to seek forgiveness from the divine (Matt 3:2, 6).⁵⁰ The true essence of penitence is in self-analysis. Meditation helps in tracking in one-self all the evils and plucking them out one by one.⁵⁰ It is important to get rid of indignation, malevolence, hatred and foul language. (Col 3:8). This is how the spirit modifies and heals. A person who practices spiritual meditation becomes empathetic, benevolent, calm and composed.⁵⁰

Repetition of the Holy name(s) or mantra throughout the day is a part of spiritual modification such as saying Rama Rama in Hinduism, Jesus Jesus, Hail Mary or Ave Maria in Christianity, Barukhattah Adonai by Jews or Muslims repeat the Holy names of Allah or Allahu akbar. This process reassures the faith, self-believe, helps sooth nerves, improves point attention, and to harness hardships with a peaceful mind.⁵¹ A comparison between mediators who mediated with a spiritual phrase such as "God is joy" or "God is good" with those who used similar but secular version such as "I am joy" or "I am good" showed high pain endurance quality along with less nervousness, fewer episodes of headaches and improved sense of existential well-being in those who mediated

with spiritual phrases.^{52,53}

MEDITATION IN ISLAM

To be a good Muslim one has to learn how to be a better human being. Islam is a religion of peace, kindness, equality, and justice. In this religion, rights and obligations of every follower are well defined and therefore this religion is complete in every aspect. In Quran Allah Almighty said:

This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed. My favor upon you and have chosen Islam as religion for you (Surah al-Maida verse 3)

Holy Prophet has always empathized on being kind to others be it a woman, man, child, elderly or even to someone who has passed away. Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

That 'a true Muslim is one from whose words and hands, others are at peace'. That no hurting or damage is done to anyone from one's speech or actions. This teaching makes no distinction between Muslims or non-Muslims, or color or creed.

Muslims adjust themselves to the teachings of Islam taking guidance from most real, uncovered, and definitive source, specifically the Qur'an and Hadist. Mending from Quran comprises of three methodologies. First is administrative impact by doing all charge of al-Quran including the health advantage of mandatory supplications, fasting, philanthropy, and hijrah (migration). Second is Health rules or wellbeing advancing things from Quran and the custom of the Prophet. Third is the immediate mending impact of the Quran.²⁸

Remembrance of Allah SWT in Islam Prayer is for the most part comprehended as all sort of activity satisfied to Allah and a demonstration of tending to decree of Allah with worship, offering acclaim, giving thank, avowing and affirming one's aggregate reliance on Allah, and asking His Grace, benevolence, and help by taking after the custom of Muhammad (PBUH).²⁸ Salat being the second pillar of Islam is a mandatory requirement to complete religious rituals. It is performed at

five specific times of a day. It is physical medicine for the body (*Al-Tibb al- Jismani*). In Islam Al-Insaan is a combination of flesh (*jism*) and soul (*ruh*). Therefore for the reconciliation and satisfaction of soul one remembers God from the very depth of heart. This remembrance is called *dikhr*. *Dikhr* is performed from *qalb* (heart) and is the healing aid for the soul (*Al-Tibb al-Ruhani*).²⁹ In Holy Quran Allah SWT said: "There has come to you indeed from Allah a Light and a clear Book" [Holy Quran Verse (5:16)]. Thereby does Allah guide those who seek His pleasure on the paths of peace, and leads them out of every kind of darkness into light by His will, and guides them to the right path. It is a firm belief of all Muslim kind that the peace of *nafs* and the control over the evil *nafs* (*an-nafs al-ammara bi'-su'*) is in the *dikhr* and supplication of Allah.²⁹

Sufism is an art in which all states of mind, heart and body are tamed disciplined and brought to complete harmony. Sufis treat the maladies of one's inner self. It's the spiritual aspect of Islam. *Dikhr*, *tasbeeh* and control of *nafs* is its main characteristics.⁵⁴⁻⁵⁷ Shams al-Din Mohammad also known as shams of Tabriz: a Persian Muslim, was a spiritual instructor of a well-known Mulana Jalālād-Dīn Muhammad Balkhi, commonly known as Rumi. Shams believed that every soul had a purpose that it can be saved and healed. Every life was important to him from a beggar suffering from leprosy to a woman prisoned in brothel. Rumi was a Sufi leader and a highly thoughtful preacher. After meeting shams, his life changed altogether in forty days, he found himself, the divine love for God-the truth of his existence. They invented the Sema-the spiritual whirling dance in which one hand points towards the sky and the other faces down to earth. It symbolizes the connection of all that is between the skies and earth as if it is one whole entity. The mysterious disappearance of a beloved companion left Rumi in distress and agony. He wrote poems in shams remembrance. His mystical poems are to this day very touching and inspiring.⁵⁸ Other inspirational Sufis were Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai, Shah Hussain, Sultan Bahu, Shah Sharaf, Khwaja Fariduddin Masud

Ganjshakar, Sultan-ul-Mashaikh, Mehboob-e-Ilahi, Hazrat Shaikh Khwaja Syed Muhammad bin Abdullah Al Hussaini, Nizamuddin Auliya, Syed Abdullah Shah Qadri. People follow their paths to find God and eternal peace. They practice spiritual meditation to draw closer to their creator. This becomes the source of satisfaction and brings out the best in them.⁵⁹

The objective and subjective benefit of prayer depend on the quality of prayer done by someone called *khusyu'* or full concentration as well as the quantity of prayer performed. In general, prayer will give catharsis effect but not remove the causative agent as if giving the placebo effect. In the long term, prayer will give causative treatment for the certain diseases such as mental disorder including neurosis and immune disease (inflammation) as well as cancer but not for congenital disease. The prayer also has benefit to prevent the impact of disease by reducing bad feeling or anger/ denial emotion to the disease with just moving past the depression and starting to accept the disease. Prayer and spirituality may have the effect to start the process of acceptance to the disease according to the Kübler-Ross model (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance) in a wide variety of situations for expressing of series of emotion experienced terminally ill patient. Prayer is very effective for palliative treatment in the terminal stage of cancer minimizing from bias i.e. spontaneous remission, the Hawthorne effect, nonspecific psychosocial support, and regression to the mean and the Rosenthal effect.³²

In today's modern world people are ready to utilize any mean that can help them rush through the process to achieve their desired targets. The intercommunity rivalry is increasing and is prevailing in our day-to-day lives. To escape from such distressing realities many individuals seek refuge by indulging themselves in unethical things such as gulping of liquor, addiction to opiates, prostitution or other vile activities. Keeping the rising social catastrophe in view WHO prescribed some profound practices, for example, supplication and religious practices-meditation for the welfare of mankind. All over

the world, everyone is pondering on how to stop the current rising tide of atrocities inflicted by man. Humanity, humility, kindness, morality, self-evaluation, be peaceful and let there be peace: these are the few teachings common in all religions.⁶⁰ A society built upon these foundations grows stronger and develops into a model of peace and security united by a common interest on a mutual ground that is the betterment of a life. Be kind to all creatures this is the true religion – Buddha. My religion is very simple. My religion is a kindness. - Dalai Lama. “My religion is humanitarianism, which is the basis of every religion in the world.” Abdul Sattar Edhi (Muslim-Pakistani).

COCLUSION

Spiritual medicine is becoming common the platform for all kinds religion to get inner peace and to draw closer with Creator. Spiritual medicines have two kind i.e. meditation and prayer. Many people practice meditation or prayer to treat stress and anxiety related illnesses and also to minimize physical trauma and pain. Spiritual medicine may give benefit for prevention of disease, promoting of health, treatment of disease, especially for therapeutic and palliative. Spirituality may have the effect to start the process of acceptance to the disease according to the Kübler-Ross model as series of emotion experienced by the terminally ill patient from denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance of their condition. The ultimate goal of spiritual medicine in Islam according to Sufis is to bring people in the best dying process with blessing dead and getting the pleasure of Allah as the Only One God and to be really the best human being. All benefits of the spiritual medicine are important in this modern era to prevent people escape from distressing realities by consuming drug or narcotic, alcohol and indulging their sexual drive not properly.

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