

Review article

Health and healing in Islam: links and gaps with (post)modern practices

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Abstract:

Therapeutic interventions deal with healthy living i.e., maintenance of good health, dealing with conditions that requires special care such as child birth and healing i.e., treatment and cure of the sickness. Islam guides mankind to have ultimate faith on Allah Almighty's approval for healthy living and healing as well as provides guidelines for cleanliness, healthy eating/drinking habits and controlled physical and mental stress. Thus, holistic view of healthy living and healing in Islam is founded both on the faith on the oneness and the almighty authority of Allah as well as physical, social, psychological factors. Revealed scriptures before Qur'an, gave equal emphasis on the same faith and factors. At the same time, different schools of thought of therapeutic interventions deal either with the physical or the metaphysical means of health and healing. This paper will discuss the links and gaps between Islamic principles and practices for health and healing and similar practices in other faith and therapeutic interventions observed in (post)modern community.

Keywords: healthy living; health and healing in Islam; modern medicine; integrative medicine

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Introduction

Therapeutic interventions deal with the prevention, treatment and cure of the sickness as well as guide to maintain good health and to deal with certain physiological issues that requires special care such as pregnancy and child birth. Mankind has adopted various means to maintain proper health to prevent or treat sickness. Maintaining the proper balance of human physiology (healthy) depends on the intake of food and drink; cycle of sleep (or resting) and awake (or activity), environmental ambience as well as spiritual, psychological and social stability.

Divine guidelines were provided for the mankind in succession to lead human life since the arrival of Prophet Adam and Eve on earth. In that series of scriptures, Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and declared as the final and the completed version of such codes preceded by *Taorah* () and *Injil* (Gospel) revealed to Prophet Musa عليه السلام and Prophet Isa عليه السلام, son of Maryam respectively. The code of life both in the Qur'an *Taorah* and *Injil* are meant to worship the Almighty through rituals as well to lead the worldly life as the vicegerent (representative) of almighty Allah. In other words, fundamental principles of all aspects of life are provided in the scriptures. Principles of maintaining good health are also part of those codes. However,

mankind has adopted changes hence persuaded modified life-style compared to that of 15/20 century earlier.

Practices based on the principles which were revealed at the time of the respective Prophets have been modified too. Such modifications are apparent in ritual practices, socio-economic dealings as well as day-to-day life styles of an individual of a modern time when compared to those of an individual of the time of the Prophets.

These changes are also noticeable in respect to the principles and practices meant for healthy living and healing. For instance, practice of vaccination (immunization) has become imperative in 21st century, while the concept of current vaccination was unknown at the time of revelations. Furthermore, consumption of targeted genetically modified (transgenic) food for added nutrition and vitamins were unknown as well. On the other hand, concept of quarantine to restrict spread of infectious diseases was being practiced during the time of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ as he asked neither to enter not to come out from a plague inflicted area. Similar practice of quarantine is being practiced to control the spread of Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). At the same time, principles and practices of cleanliness and hygiene during the time of

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Prophet Mohammad ﷺ are acknowledged through empirical evidence at modern time. Thus there are both similarities and dissimilarities in terms of principles and practices of health and diseases between the time of the Prophets and at present.

The current chapter will derive four fundamental principles of health and healing using using *Qur'an* and *hadith* as the primary source of information. These principles and related practices will then be compared to identify the links and gaps with different forms of therapeutic interventions dominating in the (post)modern community. At the end this manuscript will also highlight how a Muslim can accept the therapeutic interventions developed by people of other faiths.

Basic principles of health and healing in Islam

Guidelines for healthy living and healing available in *Qur'an* and the descriptions of actions and precepts of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ described in *hadith* signifies combined reliance upon the divine, spiritual, psychological, physical, social and ecological factors related to human health and healing of sickness. Analyzing *Qur'anic* verses and *hadiths* related to health and diseases, four fundamental principles can be derived. These four principles can be used to evaluate different models of therapeutic interventions and health and healing described in other revelations. At this point of discussion it is noteworthy to highlight that Prophet Mohammad ﷺ gave utmost priority to the Allah Almighty's approval for the prevention and cure of disease and practiced healthy lifestyle for cleanliness, eating habits and control of physical and mental stress. He also acknowledged natural products having medicinal values and took advice from the physicians. Thus, teachings from Islam ensures that for both the maintenance healthy living (health) and finding cure (healing) of a disease need spiritual (faith in the divine authority and revelations), psychological (providing mental support during sickness) and physical means (such as honey and cupping).

Principle 1: Disease is a benediction

Sickness is generally considered as the derangements of physiological or psychological events and perceived as a negative manifestation. In Islam however, sickness is primarily a test to the believers and provides expiation for sins thus a benediction from Allah. This principle is derived based on the lessons from *Qur'an* and *hadith* highlighted in Table 1.

Principle 2: Good health is a blessing

Despite the fact that each believer will be tested with

afflictions such as ailments, Allah the Almighty wants His servants to be in good health. In other words, good health is considered as blessing. Basis of this principle is derived from the *Qur'an* and *hadith* as highlighted in Table 1.

Principle 3: Allah sent cure for every disease

Since Allah the almighty wants His servants in good health, He also sent down cure for every disease except ageing and death. Notably taking medicine for the cure for a disease is permissible only using those which are defined *halal* (permissible) for human consumption. In other words, finding cure in medicine which otherwise would be considered *haram* (prohibited) is forbidden. Related lessons from *Qur'an* and *hadith* to derive this principle are highlighted in Table 1.

Principle 4: Cure needs divine intervention

Medical treatment, even if compulsory, cannot be considered as the sole cause of cure rather it is a means for healing and merely as an addition with the permission of Allah. The curing effect of a medicine, if it is there, is given by Allah. For example, despite the eradication or complete cure of certain infectious diseases are linked with certain drugs or vaccines,^{1,2,3} the sole responsibility of a medicine for the cure/eradication of a disease is denied in Islam. Moreover, the Prophet ﷺ emphasized that the best supplication is to seek good health (Table 1). These explain the ultimate submission to Allah for health and healing *Iman* (faith) is at the centre of all principles and practices in Islam and other revelations. It might be perceived that these principles are seemingly contradictory (Figure 1). For instance if sickness is considered benediction for the believers (Principle 1) why would Allah wants His servants to supplicate for good health (Principle 3). Or, why would He provide cure for every disease (Principle 2) while He is holding the ultimate approval for the cure (Principle 4). Such seeming contradictions can be resolved if those are analyzed using the fundamental components of faith to accept and follow any divine revelations. According to the divine revelations, mankind has the obligation to have *Iman* in (i) Allah, the Almighty creator and His supreme authority over everything in the universe (ii) His angels (iii) His revelations (iv) His Messengers (v) on the Judgment day (vi) in destiny, that the good and the evil are from Allah and (vii) life after death (life hereafter). While disease is considered benediction for the believers (Principle 1) good health is considered as a blessing (Principle 3). Therefore, the question may arise if an individual should seek for and make effort

Table 1. Derivation of basic principles of health and healing in Islam [Translation of the relevant part of Qur`anic verses and <i>hadith</i> are quoted]	
Reference from Qur`an and <i>Hadith</i>	Lessons
Principle 1: Sickness is benediction	
<i>And (remember) Ayyub (Job), when he cried to his Lord: 'Verily, distress has seized me, and You are the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy. [Al-Qur`an, 21:83]</i>	Disease is test for the believers. Trails with affliction is obvious for those who would enter paradise. Sickness is means to expiate sins.
<i>Or you think that you will enter Paradise without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They were afflicted with severe poverty, ailments and were so shaken that even the Messenger and those who had faith with him said, 'When will the Help of Allah come?' Yes! Indeed Allah's help is close! [Al-Qur`an, 2:214]</i>	
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that" [Narrated by Abu Hurayrah ﷺ. Sahih al-Bukhari]	
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "There is no problem, If Allah wills, He will purge your sins by this illness"	
<i>There is no blame upon the blind nor any blame upon the lame nor any blame upon the sick nor on yourselves that you eat from your houses. [Al-Qur`an, 24:61]</i>	
Principle 2: Good Health is a blessing	
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "There are two blessings in which most people are in great loss: (i) Good health and (ii) free time."	Good health is a blessing from Allah.
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Take advantage of five conditions before five others: (i) youth before old age, (ii) good health before sickness, (iii) free time before you become occupied, (iv) wealth before poverty and (v) life before death."	
Principle 3: Allah sent cure for every disease (except aging and death)	
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Allah did not send down any disease without sending down its cure". [Narrated by Abu Hurayrah ﷺ. Sahih al-Bukhari]	Every disease has a cure. Anything haram is not acceptable as medicine.
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Allah has sent down the disease and the cure and for every disease there is a cure. So take medicine but do not use anything haram (unlawful) as medicine." [Narrated by Abu l-Darda ﷺ. Sunan Abu Dawud]	
<i>We sent down in the Qur`an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss. [Al Qur`an, 17: 82]</i>	Qur`an is a source of healing for believers
<i>There issues from within the bodies of the bee a drink of varying colors wherein is healing for mankind. [Al-Qur`an, 16:69]</i>	Honey and Cupping is a means of healing
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "If there was something excellent to be used as a remedy then it is cupping (hijama)." [Reported by Abu Hurairah ﷺ. Sahih Sunan abi Dawud]	
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Healing is in three things: in the incision of the copper, in drinking honey, and in cauterizing with fire, but I forbid my Ummah (nation) from cauterization (branding with fire)." [Reported by <i>Abdullah ibn Abbas</i> ﷺ. Sahih al-Bukhari]	
Principle 4: Cure Needs divine intervention	
<i>And when I am ill, it is [Allah] who cures me. [Al Qur`an, 26:80]</i>	
Aysha ﷺ stated, "When Prophet Mohammad ﷺ was ill, he used to recite the four Quls (Al Qur`an, 111-114), blow on his hands and pass them over on the back and front. He ﷺ also recited these surahs, blew on his hands and passed them over his body during his fatal illness." [Bukhari, Muslim]	Seeking mercy & refuge to Allah for healing by reciting Qur`anic verses
<i>[The Day] when Allah will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, remember My favor upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the Pure Spirit; ... and you healed the blind and the leper with My permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My permission; and when I restrained the children of Israel from [killing] you when you came to them with clear proofs and those who disbelieved among them said, "this is not but obvious magic." [Al- Qur`a'n, 5:110]</i>	

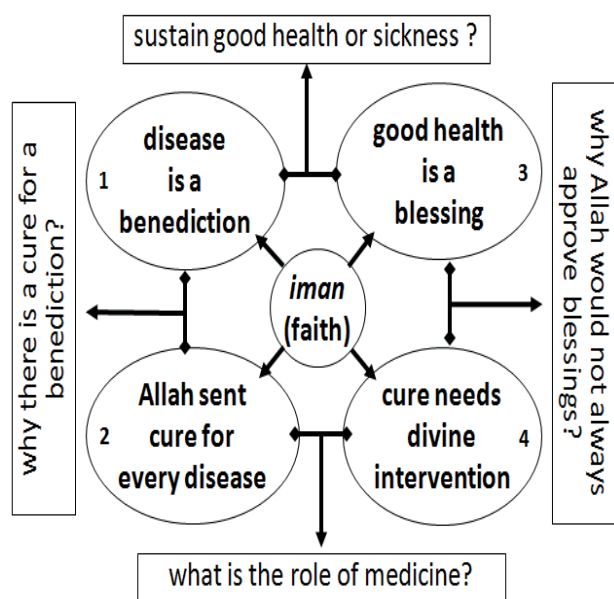


Figure 1. Four principles of health and healing in Islam

for good health or to sustain sickness. Again, while Allah sent cure for every disease (Principle 2), He holds the ultimate approval for the cure (Principle 4). The seeming contradiction in these principles can be resolved if they are founded on the fundamental creed of Islam i.e., *Iman* (faith).

Hence, those who believes in ultimate authority of Allah and in ultimate destiny either in paradise or hell, would evaluate the ultimate success depending on the verdict on the Judgment day. In other words, a believer would accept any (apparent) sufferings due to illness (or other afflictions) in this life as a form of trial for the ultimate success in life hereafter. At the same time s/he would seek for good health to engage in worship both in the form of rituals and to fulfill his/her duty as vicegerent of their creator.

Means of health and healing in Islam remains open. The number of specific clinical conditions and respective treatments described in the Qur'an and *hadith* is far less than those are currently available. However, according to the *hadith*, we know that Allah has not sent down any disease, except for death and aging, without the remedy for it. In other words, if not mentioned in Qur'an and *hadith*, identification of new means of health and healing remains open in Islam.

Furthermore, Allah says: "*We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is a healing and mercy to those who believe*" [Al Qur'an, 17:82]. This does not mean that the therapeutic strategies in Islam are too general or limited to recitation of Qur'anic verses. The Qur'an as a complete code of life

provides necessary guidelines for a healthy lifestyle such as eating habits, stress control, sex habits and cleanliness.⁴ Thus, healthy life style based on the teachings from Qur'an would prevent many common diseases at modern time including cardiovascular and sexually transmitted diseases.^{5,6}

Forms of therapeutic interventions in 21st century Analyses of the causes and manifestations of diseases have resulted in diverse schools of thought leading to unique principles of therapeutic intervention. Application of these principles differs depending upon the definition of different stages in the pathogenesis of disease (progression of symptoms of disease), the type and use of drugs and medicines, and the way of dealing with diseased individuals and their levels of tolerance. In all these schools of thought, therapeutic interventions deal either with the material or the metaphysical aspects of health and disease.

At a global scale, biomedical model of therapeutic interventions also known as modern medicine is the dominant model of health care system in developed countries. Nevertheless the increased interest in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) during the past decade with average of 32% prevalence of use of CAM make its use visible in all parts of the world. Likewise public attitude for CAM appeared positive, despite the concern about its' clinical effectiveness raised by many medical professionals.

Biomedical model of therapeutic interventions

Origin of current biomedical model of therapeutic interventions dates back to Hippocrates (4th Century BC). According to writings attributed to Hippocrates in the 4th century BC, personality and illness are dependent upon four humors (yellow bile, black bile, phlegm, and blood) usually present in the body and matching the four seasons (summer, autumn, winter, and spring, respectively). Each is associated with one of the four equal and universal elements (fire, earth, water and air, respectively) and in turn with certain qualities (hot and dry, cold and dry, cold and moist, and hot and moist, respectively). Because an imbalance in the humors was considered the central cause of personality problems or illness in this philosophy, interventions for healing were aimed at restoring this balance.⁷

The biomedical model of disease is mostly developed in the postindustrial western world. According to this model, disease is defined as derangement of normal function that can be described in biochemical, genetic or structural terms detected by objective measurement and can be improved by appropriate

(bio)chemical, genetic or surgical intervention.⁸ This approach has led to evidence-based medicine where new information is evaluated and integrated into healthcare practices.

Therapeutic interventions based on the concept of a life-giving or vital force

A number of therapeutic interventions used the concept of a life-giving or vital force generally referred to as vitalism. These are mainly based on two general principles: (i) the functions of a living organism are due to a vital principle distinct from physicochemical forces and (ii) biological activities are directed or influenced by supernatural force. The central concept of intervention in these healing systems is the reinforcement or activation of the vital force, in whatever form, thus retrieving the balance and the proper functioning of the body. Although the earliest school of thought which uses such principle dates back to Hippocrates, however, this concept is not limited to ancient sources or primitive societies, as shown by other examples, given below.

Traditional Chinese medicine considers the material world to be made of five elements (water, earth, metal, wood, and fire) with four bodily humors (*qi*, blood, moisture, and essence) balancing the energies that is essential for health. Acupuncture is an important therapy in the traditional medicine of China, Japan, and Korea and relies on contemplation and reflection on sensory perceptions to understand the human condition, including health and illness.⁹ Ayurveda, the major traditional medicine in India, considers five elements (ether, air, fire, water, and earth) that are coded into three forces or *doshas* (*kapha*, *pitta*, and *vata*) that govern all life processes.¹⁰ In both the Chinese and Indian systems, disease develops when the energies are not balanced, and interventions aim at restoring harmony.

Other schools of thought which uses similar principles i.e., based on different forms of metaphysical aspects of energy and vital force¹¹ were developed in modern time. For example, Anthroposophical medicine is based on the divine elements in nature, astral body;¹² Reichian psychotherapy (orgone therapy) is based on the concept of orgone energy;¹³ Homeopathy is based on the doctrine - anything capable of producing detrimental symptoms (illness) is capable of relieving the similar symptoms.¹⁴

Common factors of health & healing

It is clear from the above discussion that different schools of thought have identified different factors that contributes to different state of health and healing. Although these factors which contribute

towards healthy living and provide protection from potential sickness may differ from one tradition to another, yet there are areas where some of the factors share common attributes. For example, whether they deal with energy, spirit or soul; cellular or molecular events; or natural and herbal products, guidelines for cleanliness, balanced diet, controlling physical and mental stress for healthy living are common in all forms of therapeutic interventions currently observed at (post)modern communities in different parts of the world. These are also available in divine guidelines. To discuss the overlapping domains between these principles and practices of health and healing, these factors can be categorized into four groups namely, (i) ecological & social factors, that includes, environmental pollution, social interaction, and control of infectious disease through quarantine (ii) physical factors including dietary habits, bacteria and virus as the etiology of diseases, and use of antibiotics, vaccines and natural medicine for healing (iii) psychological factors such as mental stress and mind control, and (iv) spiritual factors that include faith in Almighty creator and forms of rituals and worship (Figure 2).

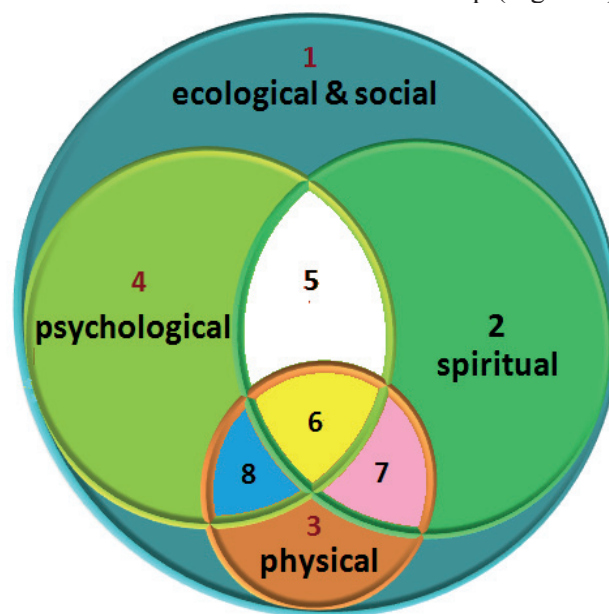


Figure 2. Factors contributing towards healthy living and healing.

An individual may enjoy healthy state at ecological & social, spiritual physical, and psychological level (labeled as area 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively). Or, an individual may enjoy combinations of healthy state such as spiritually and metaphysically healthy (area 5 and 6) or spiritually, physically and psychologically healthy (area 6, 7, and 8). Again, for

healing an individual may depend solely on physical means or combined physical and psychological or psychological and spiritual means.

These factors may contribute both for healthy living and for healing in combination or in single. For example, one may feel healthy both spiritually and metaphysically or only physically (Figure 2). At the same time for healing, in case of sickness, the individual may either depend on both spiritual and psychological means or on physical means.

Ecological and social factors for health and healing
The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as being 'a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing'- that confirmed 'health' as a ecological and social issue as well. Thus health and healing depends on factors that influences an individual's physical, metaphysical (mental) as well as ecological and social health. Some of the factors that influences ecological and social well being of an individual are highlighted below.

Control of infectious diseases: Transmission of infectious diseases often can be controlled by restricting movement of the infected persons. Based on these principle, strict regulations are often adopted to control the spread of a deadly infectious disease. For example, SARS epidemic was controlled by restricting travelling from and within the affected regions.¹⁵ A similar practice was observed during the time of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ as he advised neither to escape from nor to enter into the plague-inflicted areas (Table 2).

Control of environmental pollution and human excretion: Hygienic practice of sanitation helps to control spreading many deadly infectious diseases of fecal origin. Presence of fecal coliform group of infectious bacteria (*Eschericia coli*, *Salmonela*, *Enterobacter* and others), coliform bacteriophages and reoviruses (the Norwalk virus) has been a major concern for the quality of drinking water, recreational water and also for the natural water bodies for healthy environment of flora and fauna therein [Shiaris et al., 1987; Mallin et al., 2006]. Similar concept of sanitation and hygiene were instructed by the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ as he prohibited discharge of human excretion in water sources, in shady (wet) areas and on the road side and public places (Table 2).

Social and family supports for the sick: It is commonly agreed that social interaction during sickness helps both alleviation of pain and quick recovery. A number of papers presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Neuroscience in 2012 presented support

that companionship can play a key role in recovering from pain. Having a friend nearby to the patients having surgical intervention were reported to reduce stress which, in turn, allows quick healing after surgery. Furthermore, Courtney DeVries professor at Ohio State University, USA said, "we believe that socially isolated individuals are physiologically different from socially paired individuals, and that this difference seems to be related to inflammation". These observations echoes a large number of *hadiths* where Prophet Mohammad ﷺ encouraged and even gave utmost importance to visit sick people (Table 2). Before converting to Islam, the people of Medina prevented the blind, the lame and the sick to eat with them at a table. With the revelation of Qur'anic verses (Table 2), this such social customs were stopped. These verses also gave proper honor to a human being irrespective of their health conditions.

Physical factors of health & healing

Based on the WHO definition state of physical well being is also an important aspect of healthy life. In other words, sickness can be manifested in physical terms such as, injury, organ dysfunction, impaired growth and development of organ and infection by pathogens. At the same time a number of physical activities such as cleanliness and hygiene, appropriate dietary habits and natural may subside or prevent such physical manifestation of sickness. The Qur'an as a complete code of life provides the basic principles of social, economical and many other aspects of life, including necessary guidelines for a healthy lifestyle of an individual for example, eating habits, cleanliness, sexual habits (Table 2). It is now well established that a number of diseases such as AIDS, syphilis and gonorrhea are related to sex habits. Again, diseases related to abuse of alcohol drinking habits are linked to number of diseases such as liver cancer.

Besides, honey, dates, black seeds, olive oil and vinegar are praised and recognized as powerful treatments for many diseases as described in Qur'an and *hadith* (Table 2).

Psychological factors of health & healing

A number of Qur'anic verses and *haidths* have reflected on the importance of controlling greed and anger and impatience (Table 2). Notably, Greed, anger or loss of patience in turn may increase psychological stress of an individual. And, psychological stress has been linked to cardiovascular diseases.^{16,17}

Beside these common ground of mental health and sickness, other forms of psychological health and healing can be highlighted which share common

means of mind control observed both in practices guided in Islam and in modern medicine. In one occasion, prayer was recommended by Prophet ﷺ as a source of healing for stomach ache (Table 2).

Similar approach of mind control through *hypnosedation*, if not through prayer, was applied for ~5000 patients who were given <1% of the medications required for general anesthesia. Therefore, suggesting prayer for healing of bodily pain such as stomach ache could be significantly meaningful at the psychological (mind) and spiritual level. Besides, an increasing number of evidence from neuroscience describes effectiveness of 'placebo effect' of therapeutic interventions. Many of which emphasizes the importance of addressing social, psychological, and spiritual factors with equal rigor.¹⁸

Spiritual means of health and healing

Describing spiritual health or spiritual healing requires the definition of the word spirituality. The word spirituality is defined in many ways and there is no universal definition.¹⁹ In the current chapter, spirituality is referring to the faith and practice based on the divine scriptures which Allah has revealed to mankind. An individual may practice according to the divine revelations they have faith in. In that context, an individual may have his/her own spiritual world view. Spiritual health and healing will refer to those means of health healing that are related to the faith in the existence of Allah and his ultimate authority on everything on earth and in heavens and in between (hereafter will be referred as divinity).

In a number of occasions, Qur'an has mentioned the disease of the heart - which mostly refers to the condition of denial of His authority over each and every creations in heavens and earth and in between. In other words, the denial of faith on Allah and His creations are referred as disease of the heart of non believing wo/men (Table 2). The one and only healing of this sickness is to have faith in the divinity. According to the fundamental creed of Islam, lack of faith in divinity would end up in denial of the divine revelations as well. In turn this would result in a living without the divine guidelines related to healthy living. As mentioned in earlier sections, the Qur'an provides guidelines not only for worship and rituals but also for healthy living at physical, psychological and ecological and social level. Therefore, lack of faith in divinity might end up in denial of following the guidelines of healthy living. For example, prohibition in alcohol drinking can be observed only

upon conviction on the faith that Allah has made alcohol forbidden. While denial of divinity might result in alcohol consumption and related sickness. Thus spirituality of an individual contributes to his/her health and healing.

Furthermore, affliction due to evil spirit is recognized in Islam. Hence the prevention and cure from those evil affliction is also provided, mainly through seeking refuge the almighty Allah i.e., through spiritual means (Table 2). As means of protection or prevention from fatal illness, Prophet Mohammad ﷺ used and prescribed to recite certain verses of the Qur'an and seek mercy and refuge to Allah. This in turn reflects need of spiritual intervention for good health. Holistic view of health and healing in Islam includes divine intervention

In Islam, supreme authority is attributed to Allah. Such authority is also manifested in health and healing. It is well known from the currently available versions of *Injil* that Prophet Isa عليه السلام was given miraculous power to cure blindness or bring live to death. Qur'an states the same while attributing the authority to Allah.

It is the divine intervention that allows an individual to live either in the state of good health (healthy) or in the state of sickness. While healing may be sought through spiritual, ecological/social, psychological and/or physical means, the ultimate approval for healing depends on the divine intervention. Again, balance or imbalance of those factors may lead an individual through their own action (human action) either towards healthy living or towards the state of sickness respectively. Indeed these factors that controls health and sickness and the human action are also part of divine intervention (Figure 3).

The outer circle of the diagram represents the fact that everything is in the control of divine intervention. While healing may be sought through spiritual, ecological/social, psychological and/or physical means, the ultimate approval for healing depends on the divine intervention. Again, balance or imbalance of the factors through human action may lead towards healthy living or towards the state of sickness respectively. Indeed these factors that controls health and sickness and the human action are also part of divine intervention.

Current practices of health and healing: bottom line for a Muslim

For practical reasons, modern medicine is usually the preferred option (when it is accessible along with other options) for the prevention or cure of a disease. This may be because applications of modern medicine

Table 2. Health and healing in Islam: common domains with other therapeutic interventions. [Translation of the relevant part of Qur`anic verses and <i>Hadith</i> are quoted]
Reference from Qur`an and <i>Hadith</i>
Ecological and Social Factors of Health and Healing
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "If you hear of its (plague) presence in a land, do not enter it, but if it spreads in the land where you are, do not fly from it." [Narrated by Abdullah ibn Abbas ؓ. Sahih Muslim]
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Every Muslim has five rights over another Muslim (i.e., he has to perform five duties for another Muslim): to return the greetings, to visit the sick, to accompany funeral processions, to accept an invitation, to respond to the sneezer [i.e., to say: 'Yarhamuk-Allah (may Allah bestow His Mercy on you),' when the sneezer praises Allah]." [Reported by Abu Hurairah ؓ, Sahih Al-Bukhari].
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Verily, Allah, the Exalted, and Glorious will say on the Day of Resurrection: 'O son of Adam, I was ill but you did not visit Me.' He would say: 'O my Rubb, how could I visit you and You are the Rubb of the worlds?' Thereupon He would say: 'Did you not know that such and such a slave of Mine was ill but you did not visit him? ...'" [Reported by Abu Hurairah ؓ, Sahih Al-Bukhari]
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Beware of the three curses- excretion in water sources, in shady (wet) areas and on the road side and public places" [Narrated by ... Sahih Muslim]
"We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur`an that which is a healing and mercy to those who believe" [Al Qur`an. 17:82]
"Al-'Abbas ibn 'Abdalmuttalib asked the Prophet ﷺ, teach me something to ask Allah. He said: Ask Allah for good health" [Narrated by Ibn Umar ؓ. Sunan al-Tirmidhi].
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "No supplication is more pleasing to Allah than a request for good health." [Narrated by Ibn Umar ؓ. Sunan al-Tirmidhi]
Physical factors of health and healing
"O ye who believe! Eat of the good things wherewith We have provided you, and render thanks to Allah if it is (indeed) He Whom ye worship." [Al-Qur`an. 2:172]
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, 'Hold fast to two medicines: honey and the Qur`an'. [Narrated by Abd Allah ؓ. Sunan Ibn Majah].
"Then eat of all fruits, and follow the ways of thy Lord, made smooth (for thee). There cometh forth from their bellies a drink divers of hues, wherein is healing for mankind. Lo! herein is indeed a portent for people who reflect. [Al-Qur`an. 16:68]
"And lo! in the cattle there is verily a lesson for you. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, and many uses have ye in them, and of them do ye eat." [Al-Qur`an. 23:20]
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said.: "There is healing in Black Cumin for all diseases except death." [Narrated Abu Huraira ؓ, Sahih Bukhari]
Numerous hadith and Quranic verses are available to highlight the importance of cleanliness, inhibition of eating intoxicants and forbidden foods
Metaphysical factors of health and healing
"Those who spend (of that which Allah hath given them) in ease and in adversity, those who control their wrath and are forgiving toward mankind; Allah loveth the good" [Al-Qur`an, 3: 134].
"Save those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to endurance." [Al-Qur`an, 103: 3]
Prophet Mohammad ﷺ had asked Abu Hurayrah: 'Does your stomach ache?' He said: 'Yes, o Messenger of Allah'. The Prophet said ؓ, 'So stand up and pray, as there is healing in prayer.' [Narrated by Abu Hurayrah ؓ. Sunan Ibn Majah].

<p>During the battle of Siffin, an arrow went into the leg of Amir al-Mo'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him). The Imam was in great pain because of this injury, and blood was flowing out of his wound. However much the Muslims tried, they were not able to remove the arrow. The Muslims went to Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (peace be upon him) and asked him what would be the best way to remove the arrow from his father's leg? Imam Hasan replied, "Be patient and wait until my father stands for Salat, then at that time, pull the arrow out of his leg because at the time of Saldt, my father is so deeply engrossed in communicating with his Lord, asking and begging Him for his needs, that he will not feel the pain." The people acted according to what Imam Hasan (peace be upon him) told them, and while The Commander of the Faithful 'Ali (peace be upon him) was praying to his Lord, they managed to pull the arrow out. After Imam 'Ali finished his Salat, he noticed that blood was coming out of his leg and asked those around him as to what had happened. The people replied that while he was praying, they removed the arrow from his leg! [Narrated by Abu Hurayrah ﷺ. Sunan Ibn Majah].</p>
<p>"He it is who sent down peace of reassurance into the hearts of the believers that they might add faith unto their faith." [Al-Qur'an, 48:4]</p>
<p><i>"In their hearts is a disease, and God increaseth their disease."</i> [Al-Qur'an, 2:10]</p>
<p><i>"But as for those in whose hearts is disease, it only addeth wickedness to their wickedness."</i> [Al-Qur'an, 9:125]</p>
<p><i>"And when the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease were saying: God and His Messenger promised us naught but delusion."</i> [Al-Qur'an, 33:12]</p>
<p><i>"Have they not traveled in the land, and have they hearts where with to feel and ears wherewith to hear ? For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind".</i> [Al-Qur'an, 22:46]</p>
<p><i>"And he whom God guideth, he is led aright, while, as for him whom He sendeth astray, for them thou wilt find no protecting friends beside Him, and We shall assemble them on the Day of Resurrection on their faces, blind, dumb, and deaf"</i> [Al-Qur'an, 17:97]</p>
<p><i>Spiritual means of health and healing</i></p>
<p><i>Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind, The Sovereign of mankind. The God of mankind, From the evil of the retreating whisperer, Who whispers [evil] into the breasts of mankind, From among the jinn and mankind."</i> [Al-Qur'an, 114, 1-6]</p>
<p><i>"Verily in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest."</i> [Al-Qur'an, 13:28]</p>
<p>Ayesha ﷺ stated, "When anyone among them had an illness, Prophet Mohammad ﷺ used to rub the area of the pain reciting the following dua: <i>O Lord of the people, remove this pain and cure it, You are the one who cures and there is no one besides You who can cure, grant such a cure that no illness remains.</i> And recites the following supplication for seven tiems: <i>I ask Allah who is the Lofty and the Lord of the Mighty Throne that He cures you [...]</i></p>
<p>Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "No supplication is more pleasing to Allah than a request for good health." [Narrated by Ibn 'Umar. Sunan al-Tirmidhi]</p>

for instance, vaccination, have reduced the incidence and mortality due to many infectious diseases.^{1,20,21,22} Further, gene therapists are confident that they can eliminate specific diseases using this therapeutic technology.^{23,24} Thus, confidence in the ability of a particular drug or vaccine is very high, often being considered as the one and only option especially when found to be effective. Nevertheless, acceptance of the medicines for the purpose of healing would be permitted for those who take the medicines merely as an addition, not as a substitution, while having confidence in the blessings of Allah for the ultimate healing. In other words, so far as a Muslim's faith is concerned, the purpose of using medicines should

not conflict with the authority of Allah by giving sole credit to the effectiveness of the medicine. Complementary or alternative therapeutic strategies such as acupuncture, yoga and herbal medicine are currently being widely practiced. These treatment methodologies are based on different combinations of metaphysical aspects of energy, vital force, matter and chemical components of natural origin. Many of those are neither based on empirical evidences nor on the spiritual aspects directly linked to Islam. However, there is no reason to deny the use of these therapeutic strategies by Muslims if the following principles are met. The first one is that these therapeutic strategies do not involve the sense of

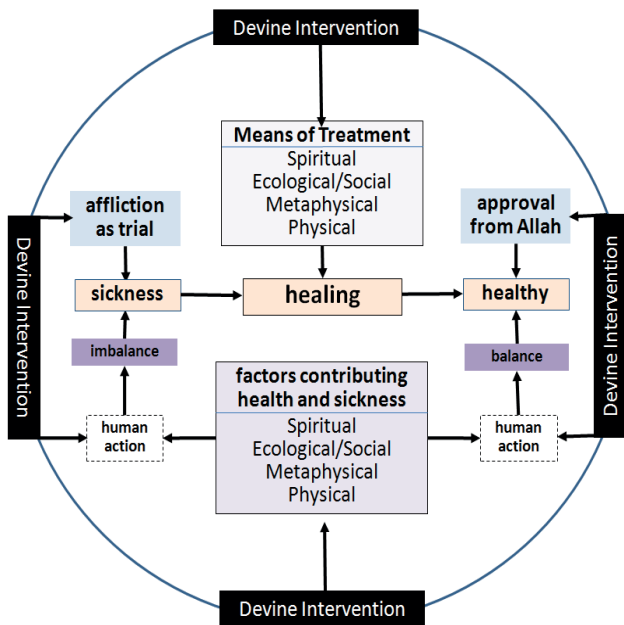


Figure 3. An holistic view of health and healing based on teaching from Islam

Shirk (false-godhood or false partnership to Allah) nor are based on any practice related with *Shirk*; the second principle is that these strategies do not deny the authority of Allah in the cure or treatment of disease; the third principle being that the therapy is not in contradiction to any text in the revelation and therefore, categorized as *haram*.

Conclusion: Many of the factors that contributes either

for a healthy state or for sickness are overlapping between the principle of health and healing in Islam and other revelations as well as that of therapeutic interventions available in (post)modern community. For example, practice of cleanliness and hygiene, use of honey, potential of black seed as a means of cure, concept of quarantine, healthy eating and drinking habits as well as controlled sex habits.

Besides, evaluation of different therapeutic strategies using guidelines from the Qur'an and *hadith* is vital for all Muslims. Health concerns such as AIDS and heart diseases, related with sex habits and psychological stress respectively could be related back to their causes as the lack of an balanced life style in modern times. The prescribed way of life in Islam based on both faith and practice would provide a holistic view of health and healing thus would be beneficial for the mankind.

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