

CAN BELIEF SYSTEM INFLUENCE

THE HEALING OF HUMAN ILLNESS ???

One of the subjects under research and discussion by medical experts of our times is whether one's belief system and faith does exert influence in the healing process of an illness. In the West where materialistic values dominate man's daily life, this subject is therefore of much significance. A number of scientists and medical men have published their experiences and conclusions on the subject.

Writing in the International Journal of Cardiology, Mr. Normal Cousins- the Professor in the Dept of Psychiastry and Bio-behavioural Sciences- describes at length the experiences of a heart patient and his conviction regarding the therapeutic value of confidence and hope also the natural process of healing caused by one's belief system. In conclusion of his article, his following words are worth pondering upon:

"..... a comprehensive program treatment involves both the full utilization of medical sciences/ and the full development of human healing system. The fact that the belief system can be vital activator of the healing system and may serve as an open door to an auspicious future in medical research and practice".

The following experience of a physician in a hospital may indicate what adverse influence a broken heart lacking in confidence and faith in the ~~Supreme~~ healing process of a malady.

Dr. Paul Ernest Adelf- a physician and surgeon ex the University of Pennsylvania - writes about his medical experience in the treatment of an old lady with a broken hip. She was responding exceedingly well to the best possible treatment provided. On being satisfied with the good recovery, Dr. Paul had decided to discharge her from hospital within twentyfour hours, so happy and cheerful she became to learn this.

The daughter of this old lady happened to come on a visit and on hearing the news of her mother's imminent discharge from hospital, she told her that it was already decided with her husband that they would not take her back home but arrangement was already made to put her directly into an old people's home. This statement shocked the old lady so much that hardly a few hours had elapsed when her improving condition suddenly reversed and deteriorated fast. Within twentyfour hours, she died not of broken hip but of broken heart.

Although all emergency medical measures were taken to restore her progress X-ray pictures had shown how the broken bones had united and that she had a stroke hip to resume normal life but alas l she did not recover. Why ? It was Hope and Confidence, when gone recovery failed. The old lady had her faith and future hope pinned entirely on her daughter and not on Allah- the true and reliable son. When that was crushed, her heart too was crushed and broken down.

In the opinion of Dr. Adolf, eighty percent of all the illnesses in large American cities have psychic causes, most important are guilt, fear, anxiety, frustration, jealousy, indecision and boredom. Unfortunately-Psychiatry one of the most thriving profession in the West today- fails where faith in God as an essential basis of approach is omitted. He concludes by saying :

" Yes indeed, there is a God. I know by abundant experience. Broken benches together with broken hearts find healing through Him."

Islam has strongly emphasized upon religious faith as the primary basis of man's wellbeing in this life and his salvation in afterlife. It also recognizes faith as a cure of many a man's life problems. Perhaps that is why in the Holy Qura'n, one comes across too often with the words 'Iman' i.e. belief-faith and 'Amanee' i.e. those who believe. Religious faith has been mentioned as an essential element of the human nature. The Holy Qura'm says:

" So set your purpose (Oh Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright - the nature (framed) of God, in which He has created man." (30 : 30)

According martyr Murtaza Mutaharri, psychologists argue that man cannot live without the need to sanctify and adore something. If an individual does not believe in Almighty Allah, that person would consider something else as the ultimate truth and will make it the subject of his or her faith and worship.

Religious faith has tremendous positive effects from the point of view of creating joy, happiness, optimism, hope. It broadens the spiritual strength of man's life and saves him from depression. It creates enlightenment in the heart acting like a torch in one's conscious. Whereas an unbeliever being empty of insight and clarity, feels imprisoned in the dark world of his own creation.

Thus, when man is afflicted with a calamity or disease, he needs all his faculties and inner physical and spiritual strength to concentrate in the alleviation of that suffering. Unless he enjoys mental peace, hope and confidence in his heart, he may not respond fully to the best of medical treatment offered to him. And what is the right source of deriving these essential qualities of life ? The Holy Qura'n has prescribed that in the following ayat:

"Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by remembrance of Allah, now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest"

(R'ad V. 28)

Medicines and tranquilizers may provide but temporary little relief. It is the staunch faith and remembrance of God that is the true source of mental peace, hope, confidence, so essential for man's lasting happiness and prosperity.