



WHOLISTIC HEALTH NEWSLETTER

Ramadan Mubarak!!!

Ramadan Issue 1426/2005

Fasting: A Prescription For The Body and Soul

"Oh you who believe, fasting is prescribed on you as it was prescribed on those before you, so that you may become more spiritually aware." (Quran 2: 183)

Fasting or abstinence from physical indulgences can take on various forms. The religious fast as ordained by Allah (swt) is an act of piety and obedience that brings the servant nearer to The Lord. It is connected to worship and, therefore, is never a purely physical discipline. Spiritual goals or achievements have always been the main objective of the divinely ordained fast. The goal expressed in the above verse is taqwa or spiritual awareness, which resides in the heart and soul. As this awareness is cultivated and increased, it is transmitted chemically and energetically to every cell in the body. As a result, there are a number of physical and psychological benefits.

Physical Benefits

The suspension of food and drink allows the body to purify itself. The stomach is able to rest and regenerate, impurities are flushed out and bodily functions begin to balance (i.e. irregularities in circulation, blood pressure, water distribution, glandular function, etc). The digestive system begins dissolving excess waste which has become obstructions that could not be absorbed through intestinal walls nor expelled. Harmful bacteria will decrease because there is less for them to feed on. Also, as the digestive system requires less energy, there is more available to other systems for repair and regeneration. Periodic fasting or interrupted fasting then is good wholistic medicine.

History

Allah says fasting was written for those (communities and nations) who came before us. In Biblical writings, Prophet Musaa (as) is mentioned as the first who fasted, though it was certainly practiced before him. The only **command** to fast in the Bible is found in the Old Testament (Leviticus

16:29; 23; 32) and is connected to the Day of Atonement. Muslims continue to commemorate this fast on the 10th day of Muharram, which is the first month of our lunar year.

According to the Talmud, the Pharisees fasted twice a week on the second and fifth days or Monday and Thursday. The period beginning on Thursday and

(Continued on page 3)

In This Issue:

Fasting, pgs 1 and 3

Pearls of Wisdom-Islamic Medicine-Foundations, pg 2

Food As Medicine, pg 3

Inspirational Quote, pg 4

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"Islamic medicine has always been eclectic - encompassing many modalities and substances natural to specific geographic areas."

Islamic Medicine: Foundations

*"Oh you human beings, there has come to you a guiding advice from your Lord and a healing what is in your chests and guidance and a mercy for those who believe."
(Quran Surah 10:57)*

Dear Readers,
Assalaamu alaikum wa rahmatullah.
Peace and Mercy be with you.

Islam is the foundational nature of the universe. It is unifying, promotes wholistic health, brings peace and harmony to all levels of existence and remains the natural law of universal function.

In our guiding text, the Quran, we are informed by our Creator that this Book has an innate ability to heal. Specifically, in the above quote, it mentions healing for the diseases that attack the heart. In our society heart disease is widespread and, of course, considered to be mainly physical. However, the primary disease of the heart is lack of belief in the reality of one's existence as a created being designed to serve The Creator.

This deficit creates a spiritual weakness or illness that opens the path to all sorts of physical disease. The heart receives instruction, guidance and illumination from Divine, intangible sources and also learns from physical, sensory input. It then coordinates all that information and programs the brain and cellular activity accordingly. Disease in the heart renders one incapable of making correct choices regarding food and diet, companions, fun and enjoyment, intellectual pursuits, etc. One inevitable consequence of living in this condition is physical disease, which will manifest the long standing deficit of the heart and soul.

So, the foundation of Islamic medicine is faith or iman. It is faith in the healing nature of Allah (swt), faith in the power of healing that exists in the Words of Allah (Quran), faith in the inherent healing ability of our own bodies and minds, faith in the healing ability of specific created things (herbs, minerals, foods, etc.), and faith that Allah, in the Divine nature of Love, Mercy and

Providence has placed servant healers throughout the earth. Some of this latter group may have the certification of the medical establishments of their country or state, many will not.

Islamic medicine has always been eclectic - encompassing many modalities and substances natural to specific geographic areas. Historically, it has evolved by integrating the Tibb un Nabawi (medicinal practices of the Prophet Muhammad (saw)) with medicinal practices of other systems. An example of this is the blended information found in the Qanun fil Tibb (Canon of Medicine) of Ibn Sina (Avicenna). This text can still be found in some medical libraries in Europe. Ibn Sina defined the art of Tibb as that which is concerned with the preservation of good health, combating disease and restoring health to the sick. This translates into the basic principles of a sound wholistic practice; preventive medicine, utilizing modalities and products to overcome disease and restoring the system to its proper state.

As long as the practitioner and the practice recognize Allah - God, respect the Divine wisdom and pattern of function of the human system and seek to restore that system to its natural function, it is Islamic.

(To be continued...)



New Recording!!! - CD/Audio Cassette. This recording contains the contents of the spiritual retreat held in the mountains of Lebanon, New York. Topics include - spiritual geography, living for universal harmony, and asmaaul husna (the attributes of Allah).

"Honor bread for Allah has made the earth and sky its servants."



"Butter is recognized by the body as a natural food and can benefit the body. It is superior to margarine."

Food As Medicine

The Prophet (saw) said, *"The stomach is the house of every disease and abstinence is the epitome of every remedy. So make this your custom."* (Bukharee)

The Prophet (saw) and his family and companions used "simple, non-artificial" remedies. Whenever food provided a simple answer as a cure, they made use of it. Proper choices of food, moderation of food and, when necessary, abstinence from certain foods or all foods are essential to health and well being. From time to time we will list some foods with their beneficial qualities.

Black Seed - *Nigella Sativa* is also known as flowering fennel, black cumin, black caraway and blessed seed. In the hadith of Prophet Muhammad it says of it that it is "a cure for every disease except death."

Some Benefits:

- Stimulates the immune system
- Increases energy
- Reduces swellings
- Source of dietary fiber
- Has anti-tumor properties
- Increases the flow of breast milk
- Rich in essential fatty acids (EFA's)
- Rich in amino acids (15)
- Rich in minerals
- Nutritive (nourishes every system in the body)

Crushed seeds mixed with honey helps dissolve gallstones and kidney stones

Bread - "Honor bread for Allah has made the earth and sky its servants." The value of the bread is due to the quality of the grain and the freshness of the loaf.

Grains in general are acid causing and excess bread can lead to weight gain, constipation, gout and aggravate eczema.

Some Benefits:

- Drying to moist conditions
- Nutritive - Vitamins A, B-complex, E, K and minerals
- Adds fiber to diet

Butter - It is hot and moist (1st degree). Butter is recognized by the body as a natural food and can benefit the body. It is superior to margarine. Balance butter by mixing it with dates or honey.

Some Benefits:

- Emollient
- Mildly laxative
- Helps recurrent swellings
- Benefits the nerves
- Lessens appetite

Bread and butter eaten together are two heat producing substances. Unless you need heat in your body, you should balance them by adding a cooling food such as cheese or water.

(Cont'd from page 1)

Fasting: A Prescription For The Body and Soul

ending on Monday is said to be the time that Prophet Musaa (as) spent traveling to Mt. Sinai, receiving the Law or Taurat and returning to his people. This was the practice during the time of Prophet Eesaa (Jesus), may peace be on him, and was the habit of Prophet Muhammad (saw) and his companions. As Muslims, we are encouraged to follow this practice and commanded to complete the annual fast in the month of Ramadan.

Spiritual Benefits

By exercising restraint on the physical desires, one who completes a fast is aided in controlling and changing bad habits. By experiencing hunger and thirst, the fasting person increases their compassion for those who suffer unwillingly and becomes more grateful for Divine provision. Fasting promotes joy in the heart, as the servant is acting in obedience to a command of his/her Lord and adds to strength of the spirit. It is the best safeguard for the illnesses of the soul, heart, mind and body and its benefits cannot be fully known. Allah (swt) tells us by way of a hadith (saying of the Prophet), *"Every deed of the son of Adam is for him except fasting. It is for me and I will give the reward for it."* Deep in the heart is the knowledge that this act of worship will bring pleasing results in this world and in the next.

Inspirational Quote



"By exercising restraint on the physical desires, one who completes a fast is aided in controlling and changing bad habits." - *Fasting: A Prescription For The Body and Soul* : Inside This Issue

"Fasting is a shield from hell and there are two joys for a fasting person - one at the time of breaking the fast and the second at the time s/he will met his / her Lord." (Bukharee: Book of Tauheed)

Future Topics:

Coping with Stress: Relaxation Techniques
The Heart - Diseases and Cures
Children's Health
Column-Islamic Medicine Continued

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