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## **The Role of Islamic Practices in Improvement and Recovery Among the Mentally Disturbed Individuals**

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### **Abstract:**

This paper is based on a study designed to investigate the role of Islamic religion and its worship practices on the Sudanese patient's improvement, beside the medical treatment. The study was aimed to identify the possibilities of devising means of psychotherapy take religious aspects into their consideration. Eysenk (1960) asserted that current psychotherapeutic methods are not highly effective in restoring normality to the people who are troubled by psychological disorders. His assertion challenged the claims made by the different psychotherapeutic schools, to the efficiency of their methods. Badri (2014) indicated that many eastern health professionals (Muslims as well) focus their attention on the gaps between western and eastern societies in terms of educational progress, technological progress, and mistakenly conclude that anything coming from the west is correct, valuable, even western professional have asserted the importance and the great influence of religion, the religion and belief on peoples' responses to life demands.

This research was carried out in Sudan's capital city which is include a lot of institutions for mentally illness patients. There were two types of questionnaires, one was for the 14 mental health professionals (psychiatrists, psychologists, and medical psychiatric doctors).The second questionnaire was for 60 (30 male and 30 female) patients who recovering rapidly from their psychological disturbances, the results showed that both patients and mental health professionals admit that religious belief is important. Also worship practices have their effects on improvement and may facilitate the treatment processes. The study recommends Patients should give more interest and attention toward religion if they believe in certain religion.

**Keywords:** The Role of Islamic Practices in Improvement and Recovery Among the Mentally Disturbed Individuals

### **Introduction**

Many definitions had been given to mental health. However, it can maintain that mental health is the ability of the individual to adjust to his/her life's circumstances efficiently, and interact with other positively. Nevertheless, life stresses and pressures that threaten their psychological well-being and adjustment. In many instances, people fall subjects to mental and psychological disorders. Psychotherapy, the intervention from the part of the mental health professionals, is the process by which the problems are talked to be solved and the individual restored to normality. The process of a successful psychotherapy, however, depends mainly on the extent to which the patient believes on it.

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Religion in general has an influential impact on its believers; it may play a role when dealing with the mentally disturbed individual. Islam as a religion in particular has great position among Muslims' nations. It influences every aspects of Muslims' life, their relationships with others, and dealing with society in general including both material and spiritual elements.

Regardless of these facts, concerning the deep penetration of Islam into Muslim's life and its ready-made solution for even psychological problems, it has not been used fully by Muslim mental health professionals as a rich source for psychotherapeutic practices. Psychotherapy now adays, is dependent on traditional psychotherapeutic schools, prominent among them are: psychodynamic (Freud, Jung and Adler). Client-centered therapy (Carl Rogers).

Humanistic-existential Gestalt (laing, Maslow, Skinner, Allport and Burdura). It is generally agreed that an effective psychotherapeutic method should contain the cultural element characteristic of society, in which it was developed, this means psychotherapy should largely be limited to its culture of origin, which also means if we use part or some particular technique in a culture different from that of the origin, we cannot use the psychotherapeutics methods were criticized by many psychological professionals (Esenk, Gardon and Allport, among others). Esenk (1960) asserted that current psychotherapeutic methods are not highly effective in restoring normality to the people who are troubled by psychological and mental disorders. His assertion challenged the claims made by the different psychotherapeutic schools, to the efficiency of their methods.

Eysenk arrived at the conclusion of doubting the efficiency claims after comparing the rate of recovery among patients undergoing psychotherapy provided by different schools, with the rate of recovery of various kinds of therapy. What he found was that the rate of recovery for people in the waiting lists was almost the same as that of the people who underwent psychotherapy. Eysenk's findings and conclusions could be explained psychotherapeutic methods schools of psychotherapy that do not cover all aspects of human's life. If the efficiency of the different psychotherapeutic methods is doubtful although they are applied in their societies of origin (Western societies), it is definitely more doubtful if they are applied in totally different societies (Eastern societies).

There are many differences between western societies, Muslim ones in particular. The differences include cultural background, educational aims, moral and religious attitudes, values, social customs, political orientation, and so on. Therefore, mental and psychological disorders in affecting people in a particular society need to be treated with consideration of the cultural orientation and life circumstances prevailing in that society. The variation reflects an un fair treatment with limited rate of recovery at best. In this case, the major goal psychotherapy (i.e. to cure) may not be fulfilled (May et al 1976; McCord, 1978, Frank et. Al, 1978).

As to the issue of applying Western psychotherapeutic methods in Muslim societies, one may assert that they are doomed to failure, or an insignificant rate of success, if they were not modified and bent

so as to conform to the Muslim cultural orientation and psychological makeup. Badri (1979) indicated that many eastern health professionals (Muslims as well) focus their attention on the gaps between western and eastern societies in terms of educational progress, technological progress, and so on, and mistakenly conclude that anything coming from the west is correct, valuable, and suitable.

A variety of empirical investigations attempted to study the various issues concerning the role of religion in solving people psychological problems. Lawrence and Brown (1962) investigated the dynamics the perceived effectiveness of religion in solving personal problems. In this study they had two variables: the first one was the type of problems, the second was the type of solution. They found that the perception of religion as a solution may vary as a function of the type of the problem that generate anxiety. However, Lawrence and Browns' finding asserted the importance of religion as an effective source for solving people's psychological problems and emphasizes the importance of investigating the dynamics through which religion achieves such effectiveness. The issue of the role of religion in mental health, and its effectiveness in solving psychological and mental disorders can not be discussed without considering the meaning of "mental health".

If we are to consider some conceptions of mental health that are espoused by eastern Muslim psychologists and mental health professionals, we find our late Tigani El Mahi (1960) who views mental health as a complex integration of medical, social, religious, and economical factors.

The absence or problems concerning any of these factors might influence mental health negatively. The major theme of this investigation is the idea that we as Muslims, and particularly some of us who identify ourselves as belonging to the psychological society and the helping professions of the psyche, should turn toward our own belief system from which we can modify and devise new Islamic oriented techniques for helping our psychologically disturbed individuals. To deny this, is to deny the logical and well-established notion that treatment of the troubled psyche irrespective of its particular belief system is doomed to failure. A Muslim psychologist or psychiatrist who would not accept, at least in an abstract ideational level, the notion of turning to his/her own cultural belief system, would in effect imprison his/her potentialities within the high walls of the imported western techniques.

A question that would logically follow such an argument would be, if we are to rely mainly on our belief system, as it rests on Islam, would it be sufficient for us in understanding, diagnosing, describing, and devising Islamic oriented psychotherapy.

For answering such a question we are required only to direct our attention, with open eyes and minds, toward the major sources of our Islamic principles, teachings, and methods of dealing with every aspect of life.

The sources here are of course "Quran" and "Hadith" (Prophet Teachings) we would find that Quran and Hadith have dealt with every aspects of the human life.

In the process, have dealt with the problems that are of concern, or should be of concern, to psychotherapy. While it would be impossible to review all aspects of concern in this limited introduction to empirical investigation, a review of some of the Islamic teachings as relevant to our purpose would be appropriate. The following verses from the holy Quran indicate that turning to religion and to Quran would be a safe guide for the Muslim against negative thoughts, negative feelings, and the troubling life circumstances. At the same time, it is the way for the troubled and disturbed individual to go back to security and positive feelings about himself and others, as well as assuring the Muslim that Almighty is always ready to accept their repentance from their sins and is showing them the way to the proper religious life.

Virtue, Reward:

قال تعالى: (إن هذا القرآن يهدي للتي هي أقوم ويبشر المؤمنين الذين يعملون الصالحات أن لهم أجراً كبيراً).. الاسراء (9)

Translation:

Verily this Quran doth guide to that which is mot right (or stable) and gives the glad things to the believers who work deeds of righteous, that they shall have a significance reward.

قال تعالى: (يا أيها الذين آمنوا اتقوا الله وأمنوا برسوله يؤتكم كفلين من رحمته)، الحديد: (28)

Translation:

O ye that believer fear God and His apostle, his will bestow on you, a double protection of his mercy, he will provide for you.

قال تعالى: (ومن عمل صالحاً من ذكر أو أنثى وهو مؤمن فلنحيينه حياة طيبة ولنجزينهم أجرهم بأحسن ما كانوا يعملون)، النحل: آية (97).

Translation:

Whoever works righteous man or woman and has faith, verily to him will we give a new lift that is good and we will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.

Healing and Mercy:

قال تعالى: (وننزل من القرآن ما هو شفاء ورحمة للمؤمنين ولا يزيد الظالمين إلا خساراً)، الاسراء: آية (82)

Translation:

We send down (stage by stage) in the Quran that which is a healing and mercy to those who believe to the unjust it curses nothing but loss after loss.

قال تعالى: (يا أيها الناس قد جاءكم موعظة من ربكم وشفاء لما في الصدور وهدى ورحمة للمؤمنين)، يونس: آية (57)

Translation:

Mankind, there hath come to you a direction from your lord and a healing for the diseases in your hearts; and for those who believe a guidance and a mercy.

قال تعالى: (هذا بصائر للناس وهدى ورحمة لقوم يؤمنون)، الجاثية: آية (20)

Translation:

These are clear evidences to men, and a guidance and mercy to those of assured faith.

Security:

قال تعالى: (الذين آمنوا وتطمئن قلوبهم بذكر الله ألا بذكر الله تطمئن القلوب)، الرعد: آية (28)

Translation:

Those who believe, and whose heart find satisfaction in the remembrance of God. For without doubt in the remembrance of God do hearts find satisfaction.

قال تعالى: (بلى من أسلم وجهه لله وهو محسن فله أجره عند ربه ولا خوف عليهم ولا يحزنون)، البقرة: آية (112).

Translation:

Nay whoever submits its whole self to God and is a doer of good – he will get his reward with his reward with his lord, a such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

قال تعالى: (الذين آمنوا ولم يلبسوا إيمانهم بظلم أولئك لهم الأمن وهم مهتدون) الانعام، آية (82).

Translation:

It is those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong – that are (truly) in security, for they are on (right) guidance.

Removing feeling of guilt fear of death:

قال تعالى: (ولن يؤخر الله نفساً إذا جاء أجلها والله خبير بما تعملون) المنافقون، آية (11)

Translation:

But to no soul will God grant respite when the time appointed (for it) has come; and God is well acquainted with (all) that ye do.

قال تعالى: (قل ان الموت الذي تفرون منه فإنه ملائكم ثم تردون إلى عالم الغيب والشهادة فينبئكم بما كنتم تعملون)، الجمعة، آية (8).

Translation:

Say? The death from which ye He with truly overtake you; then will ye be sent back to the knower of things secret and open; and he will tell you (the truth of) the things that ye did.

For forgiveness and patient:

قال تعالى: (قل يا عبادي الذين اسرفوا على أنفسهم لا تقنطوا من رحمة الله إن الله يغفر الذنوب جميعاً انه هو الغفور الرحيم)، الزمر، آية (53).

Translation:

Say “O my servants who have transgressed against their souls despair not of the mercy of God: for God forgives all sins: for he is often forgiving most merciful.

قال تعالى: (إن الله لا يغفر أن يشرك به ويغفر ما دون ذلك لمن يشاء ومن يشرك بالله فقد افترى إثماً عظيماً)، النساء، آية (78).

Translation:

God forgiveth not that partners should be setup with him, but he for giveth anything else to whom he pleaseth to set.

Number of studies accomplished by some Muslim psychologists are asserting the non-Muslim ones. El-Gadi (1984) asserted that Quran recitation, has positive effectiveness in reducing anxiety. He claims that after he compared three groups of people, non-Muslim, non-Arabic speak in experiment involved; listening to the Quran recitation for one group, listening to an Arabic for the other group, and measuring their physiological change through different instruments.

Badri (1967) had used systematic desensitization technique for treated a Moroccan female patient she had been suffered from acute generalized anxiety, feelings of inadequacy and depression, certain phobic reactions, and a number of hypochondriasis symptoms.

The treatment had done in the light of Islamic concept of sin forgiveness. After a period of time the patient partly received and predicted the possibility of successful treatment.

### **Subjects:**

The number of the subject in this study is sixty patients. Equal number of male and females; twenty nine are out-patient from Omdurman Clinic for Mental Illness, and thirty one are in-patient from El Tigani El Mahi Mental Hospital. The sample has been taken randomly. The main characteristic of these subjects is that they are being regarded by their doctors as having improved.

Different types of illnesses included, schizophrenia, depression, epilepsy, alcoholic, anxiety-state, personality disorder, and addictive (see Appendix A). The subject age ranged between (15-48), the majority of them between 21-30 with average age 25 year.

In this study fourteen mental, health, professionals (psychologists, psychiatrist, and medical psychiatry doctors) had been interviewed. They are working in El Tigani El Mahi Hospital, Bahri Mental Clinic, Medical Cops Hospital, and Omdurman Clinic for Mental Illness.

### **INSTRUMENTS:**

The information had been collected through questionnaire introduce in the inform of interview. There were two types of questionnaire:

One for the patient, contains besides, the biographical information, type of illness, type of treatment and the beneficial ones, different warship practices and its performance before the illness and after the improvement, and types of relationship towards families and relatives members, the second questionnaire for mental health professional psychologists, psychiatrist and medical psychiatry doctor. This questionnaire includes the professionals' ideas about role of religion in psychotherapy and its importance in mental health, the relationship between religious and psychological treatment and rate of importance and the possibility of having means of psychological treatment stand on religion basis, in particular Islamic religion.

### **Procedure:**

The sample of in-patient (31 patients) has been taken randomly from the population of El Tigani El Mahi Hospital (70 patients). About four of them were introduced per day. Concerning the out-patients of this study (29) patients, (18) are females and (11) are males, were selected randomly from the out-patients clinic of Omdurman Hospital. The investigator used to go for interviews about 3 days a week, the days were not fixed but randomized. Concerning mental health professionals, the interviews with them were arranged according to their suitable time. The patients' and mental health professionals, questionnaires were introduced in the form of interviews carried out by the investigator. The period that interviews took was fifteen days.

**Results:****Table no (1): Rate of Recovery**

Rate of Recovery	Very good	Moderate	Another response	Total
Number	38	18	4	60
Percentage	63.3	30	6.6	99.9

**Table No. (2)****Prayer Practice Before and After Illness and Improvement**

Prayer	No. of Sub. Before illness	%	No. of Patient After improving	%
Always	36	60	50	83.3
Sometime	14	23.3	8	13.3
No prayer	10	16.7	2	3.3
Total	60	100	60	99.9

**Table (3)****Ramadan Fasting Before Illness and After the Improvement**

Prayer	No. of Sub. Before illness	%	No. of Patient After improving	%
Always	34	56.7	48	80
Sometime	17	28.3	10	16.7
No prayer	9	15	2	3.3
Total	60	100	60	100

**Table No. (4)****Mosque's Prayer before the Illness and After Improvement**

Mosque prayer	No. of Sub. Before illness	%	No. of Patient After improving	%
Always	19	31.7	25	41.7
Sometime	20	33.3	21	35.0
No prayer	21	35.0	14	23.3
Total	60	100	60	100

**Table No. (5)****Quran recitation before the Illness and after the improvement**

Quran recitation	No. of Sub. Before illness	%	No. of Patient After improving	%
Always	12	20.0	13	21.7
Sometime	15	25.0	20	33.3
Non	33	55.0	27	45.0
Total	60	100	60	100



### **Discussion:**

As the investigator had mentioned earlier, in addition to the different psychological and psychiatric treatment the religious practices are also responsible for the rate of improvement of the mentally disturbed individuals. From this study 46 the patients asked of treatment from both modern psychiatry and native healers or vice versa interchangeably.

Both patients and their relatives contributed to this study and asked for Islamic religious treatment after filled the questionnaire. Some native healers depend on their treatment on the religion aspects, whether they truly do so or not, some patients and their relatives belief in them, and this leads to these recurrent visits to the native healers' village (Amdwanban, Kadapa, among others) some illness needs psychiatric care, however some of the patients and their relatives seek the treatment from the modern healers or therapists. The interviews revealed that: Different types of illnesses in this investigation include, Schizophrenia, depression epilepsy, alcoholic, anxiety, personality disorder, and obsessive compulsive. Schizophrenia and depression represent the higher incidences among hospitalized patients (see appendix A) 10 of the patients are alcoholic, in fact, Islam belief and warship practices may solve alcoholic dependent problems directly (Malik, Badri 1976). Concerning the rate of recovery, 63% of the patients are very good. Obviously, religious reflects from the warship practices, even those who intentionally did not performed their duties toward religion activities represents as a small proportion compared with these who practice these activities regularly. 16% of patients did not participate in prayer before illness, after the improvement decreased to 33%. While prayers always before illness this increased to 83% after improvement as showed in table 2. We can utilize this tendency toward prayer specially when dealing with neurotic patient (those who are aware and their contact with reality is mentioned) 35% of the patients did not prayer in mosque, 20% of them are female, because young female almost used to go the mosque for some traditional, and custom reasons.

Prayer is the main warship practice which Muslim must conduct; it may have beneficial aspects or impact that would be achieved through the daily performance of prayer. These beneficial aspects were including Obeying Allah and prophet, believing from daily anxiety, reducing feeling of guilt, strengthening people relationship, and so forth.

From this investigation the positive effects of prayer is obvious, half of the patient feel in comfortable, that means they become relaxed and happy after payer, see table 5.

Psycho-therapists can make use of this ready tendency by increasing patients' awareness for prayer's usefulness, in fact some of this professionals utilized these tendency toward prayer for the benefit of the patient's treatment.

The other important warship practices was Ramadan fasting 56% of the patient were fasting before illness, increased to 80% after the improvement, while 15% did not fasting before illness decreased to 3% after the improvement. The glorious Quran has a pivotal position among Muslim and this

evidence in table (5), 55% of the patients influenced by Quran positively, 35% did not influence and those include among them the non-listener 21%.

Concerning Quran recitation by the patients themselves the result as in table (5), 20% of the patients read Quran before illness this increased 21% after improvement, while 55% did not read Quran before illness this decreased to 45% after improvement, we have to consider the illiterate (see appendix A) and the in-patients 31% who have not high opportunity for Quran recitation.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Mental health professionals had concentrated most of their studies and observations of the human-self on materials effects and factors, whether environmental, economic, social, and so on.

They eliminate the effect of religion which is great (Osman El Radi, 1981) Islam for instance, is able to bestow on humans, mind the desired feelings of inner peace and stability, satisfaction and security.

Spiritual treatment can ensure mental health for some reasons: The power of applying Islamic practices , on which we can rely on, to which we can trust ourselves, which fills us with inner peace and stability. Performance of religious ceremonies like prayers and fasting are keeping away the individual from prohibitions and ensure brotherhood, love sympathy with other fellow being. Such behavior is capable of making of society free of any feeling of aggression, hatred, envy, and so on.

It is very important for the successful psychotherapeutic process to consider religion factor. Belief is essential in psychotherapy and any religion stand on certain belief.

Islam for example, based on person's belief and faith. This study shows that, in spite of the strong believes about the importance of Islamic religious practices , some patients and some mental health professionals still did not use it in wide rang with the patients in Khartoum state.

Due to the complexity nature of this investigation, and the fact that it is an exploratory research with no sufficient backing from previous research, the present investigator could not utilize the desired and more sophisticated statistical techniques (inferential statistics) and research design. Hence, the utilization of descriptive statistics. The present investigator recommends for further studies, more sophisticated and control studies for example, two groups, one experimental one given traditional therapy only, the second group given with the traditional techniques, religion involvement (perform prayer properly, read Quran singly and in groups, and so on).Ministry of health should give more attention toward Islamic practices inside the mental health institutions.

Mental health professionals could utilize this attitude for the benefit of the patients. Mass media should highlight the importance of this treatment in improving mentally disturbed

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