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Managing Stress through Islamic Perspective

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Abstract: Stress can be called as a necessary evil. One can't imagine a life without stress. A small amount of stress is good and necessary as it plays the role of motivation, but too much stress will harm the health, mind and body of the individual. So, the management of stress is more important to overcome the stressful situations in daily life. Stress can be managed through various techniques and methods. In this paper, I like to discuss various methods and techniques to manage stress in Islamic perspective. As Islam is the complete code of living which provides a complete set of code of behaviour, ethics, values, manners which deal with the each and every aspects of the individual's life such individual, moral, social, cultural, intellectual, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, behavioural and financial aspects.

Keywords - Stress, Stress Management, Islam

I. INTRODUCTION

After Christianity, Islam is the religion which has the largest number of followers in the world. Islam is not only a religion but it is a civilization too. Islam is the complete code for the human being to lead a better, happier and successful life on the earth and hereafter. Islam deals with each and every minute aspect of the individual's life. The Arabic word 'Islam' means 'Submission'. The basic framework of the Islam is the Qur'an, the holy book revealed to the prophet Mohammed (SAW) through Apostle Gabriel from Allah, the Almighty and the Sunnah, the sayings, actions and tacit approval of the Prophet Mohammed (SAW). Islam provides some tips that are helpful for the individual to manage their stress in their daily life.

II. STRESS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

In the modern technological world, stress is the common term like mobile phones, internet, laptop, Wi-Fi etc. The basis of 'Stress' lies in the Latin word 'Stringere' which means 'to draw tight'. Like the Einstein's theory of relativity, stress is a relative concept which can be defined differently in relation to different disciplines. The term "stress" was coined by Hans Selye who is known as the "Father of Stress Research". Stress can be defined as the response of the individual to any change in his environment.

No one can run away from the stress as the life in this world is full of stressors. Anything that induces stress or stress hormones can be termed as stressors. Stress is something that makes us tensed both physically, emotionally and spiritually. We can't escape from the stress but we can deal with it effectively. The techniques or methods used to deal with the daily life stressors can be termed as stress management techniques. There are so many stress management techniques that we can practice individually or with the help of a specialist.

III. STRESS MANAGEMENT: FROM THE ISLAMIC POINT OF VIEW

Islam provides the individual with a code of behaviour, ethics, values, morals which helps them in tolerating and developing adaptive strategies to deal with stressful life events. Some of the stress management techniques are discussed below with the light of Qur'an and Hadith.

(A) Remembrance of God and Recitation of Qur'an

Islam suggests the remembrance of God and recitation of Qur'an helps the believers to deal with the daily life stressful situations. "Allah lets go astray those whom He wills, and guides to Himself those who turn to Him. Such are the ones who believe (in the message of the Prophet) and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in Allah's remembrance do hearts find rest." [Holy Qur'an, 13: 27-28]. The above verses tell about the remembrance of Allah and it will give peace to the heart. "Men! Now there has come to you an exhortation from your Lord, a healing for the ailments of the hearts, and a guidance and mercy for those who believe." [Holy Qur'an, 10:57]. These verses tell about the importance of recitation of Qur'an. The study conducted by Jalil Nejadi, et.al (2014) shows that the recitation of Holy Qur'an has a positive effect on the mental health.

(B) Exercise

Exercise is one of the best methods of stress management. Physical activities reduce the stress by the release of endorphins which is called the 'happiness hormone'. Exercise keeps the individual fit both physically and mentally. Islam is the religion which gave due importance to sports and exercises. Some verses of Qur'an and Hadith are the following:

"Allah is Beautiful and loves Beauty." [Sahih Muslim, Vol. 1, Book 1, The Book of Faith, Chapter 39, 265, pp. 178]. "Land will be conquered by you and Allah will suffice you, so no one of you should give up playing with arrows." [Sahih Muslim, Vol. 5, Book 33, The Book of Leadership, Chapter 52, 4947, pp. 252]. The above hadith shows the importance of physical activities in

the life of a believer. The study conducted by **Subhash Chander (2018)** shows that the archery helps the individual to relieve from stress. There are so many evidences that during the period of Prophet, he gave importance to horse riding, shooting, wrestling, walking, running.

(C) Namaz/ Salat

Namaz/ Salat, the second basic pillar of Islam, can be called as a form of Yoga or higher form meditation which consists of certain postures and there are certain prescribed phrases to be recited in each posture. There are so many researchers that show that the Namaz/ Salat have the power to cure stress. **Hazem Doufesh, et.al (2014)** study shows that the anxiety can be reduced by the regular practice of salat. **Ajmal Majeed (2016)** is of the opinion that the Salat is the best medicine to cure stress. Namaz/ salat is the conversation between the creator and the creation. "He listens for your good. He believes in Allah and trusts the believers, and is a mercy for those of you who believe." [**Holy Qur'an, 9:61**].

(D) Show Gratitude for What You Had in Life

Islam advises its followers to show gratitude for what he had in his life. Being thankful to what you have is a method for managing stress. Showing gratitude to Allah for what he has given to us makes the individual feel happy and it makes the individual free from the stress. The Holy Qur'an Says: "If you give thanks, I will certainly grant you more; but if you are ungrateful for My favours, My chastisement is terrible." [**Holy Qur'an, 14:7**]. Another verse tells: "So remember Me and I shall remember you; give thanks to Me and do not ungrateful to Me and My favours." [**Holy Qur'an, 2: 152**]

One of the major reasons for the stress among the people in the modern world is due to comparing oneself to others or comparing our blessings to others. The Prophets of Islam says: "If anyone of you looked at a person who was made superior to him in property and (in worldly rank and in good) appearance, then he should also look at the one who is inferior to him, and to whom who has been made superior." [**Sahih Al-Buhari, Vol. 8, Book 18, The Book of AR – RIQAQ, Chapter 30, 6490, pp. 269**]. Comparing our self / our blessings with others not only induces stress but also it destroys happiness and it develops a sense of inferiority too. Therefore, we should be thankful for what we are and what we have.

(E) Balanced Diet

A balanced diet is essential for the growth, strengthening and repairing of the human body. following a healthy and balanced diet is necessary to keep the body healthy and fit. The unhealthy body makes the individual stressful and stress also leads to an unhealthy body. Islam gives due importance to keep the body healthy and fit. There are a number of hadith and verses from the Holy Qur'an which tells about the importance of maintaining the health and various food to be taken to maintain the health of the individual. There is a direct link between stress and health of the individual. Some foods induce stress while some others reduce us from the stress. The Qur'an and Hadith suggests its followers what to eat and what not to eat along with that it also explains how to eat and the manners to be followed while eating and drinking. Some of the verses of Qur'an and hadith are following: "The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, although both are good." [**Sahih Muslim, Vol. 7, Book 46, The Book of Al-Qadr, Chapter 8, Belief in the Divine Decree and Submission to It, 6674, pp. 40**]. This hadith tells the importance of health for the believers. "The food of one is sufficient for two, and the food of two is sufficient for four, and the food of four is sufficient for eight." [**Sahih Muslim, Vol. 5, Book 36, The Book of Drinks, Chapter 33, 5368, pp. 417**]. The Qur'an and Hadith suggest a number of food items such as milk, olive, fig, honey, dates etc which should be eaten. "Believers! Eat of the pure things wherewith We have provided you for sustenance and give thanks to Allah if it is Him that you serve." [**Holy Qur'an, 2:172**]. Prophet prohibited drinking and eating while standing and the reason for this is proven scientifically.

(F) Sleep

Sleep is the fundamental activity which is required to maintain the health of the individual. Sleep plays an important role in maintaining the emotions, mood, physical state, concentration, productivity, immunity, memory, cognitive power and social interaction. Allah through holy Qur'an says to the believers to sleep at night and work at the daytime. He describes the night as a garment which is meant for taking rest. Sleep is essential for the individual's emotional and physical health. The Holy Qur'an, not only says the importance of sleep but also it suggests a perfect sleeping position which is beneficial for health and which is scientifically proven. "It is Allah who has made night a garment for you, and sleep the repose (of death), and has made day the time of rising to life." [**Holy Qur'an, 25:47**]. "When you go to bed, perform Wudu as for prayer, then lie down on your right side." [**Sahih Muslim, Vol.7, Book 48, The Book of Remembrance, Supplication, Repentance and Praying for Forgiveness, Chapter 17, 6882, pp. 85**]. It is the Sunnah of the Prophet to lie on the right side and the health benefits of sleeping on the right side are proven scientifically in the recent years. Sleeping early in the night and getting up early in the morning is also the Sunnah of the prophet. Sleep plays an important role in managing the stress to a greater extent.

(G) Enjoying with The Family and Friends

One of the most accepted method for managing stress is enjoying with the family and friends. Man, as a social animal, can't live alone, he needs interactions and companionship to lead a happy and successful life. Islam never forbid its followers from enjoying with family and friends, on the other hand, it encourages the individuals to keep good relation with family, neighbours and society. "Travel is a kind of torment. It deprives one of you of his sleep, food and drink. When one of you has completed his business, let him hasten back to his family." [**Sahih Muslim, Vol. 5, Book 33, The Book of Leadership, Chapter 55, 4961, pp. 257**]. This hadith portrays the importance of sleep, food and drink. Along with that it tells about the importance of family in Islam. There are too many hadiths which give importance to the family and society. There are so many hadith that illustrates that the Prophet too spend and involved in day today activities with his wives and grandchildren's. "You shall serve none but Allah and do good to parents, kinsmen, orphans and the needy; you shall speak kindly to people, and establish prayer and give Zakat (purifying Alms). And yet, except for a few of you, you turned back on this covenant, and you are still backsliders." [**Holy Qur'an, 2:83**]. "Whatever wealth you spend let it be your parents and kinsmen, the orphans, the needy and the wayfarer; Allah is aware of whatever good you do." [**Holy Qur'an, 2:215**]. The above verses of Qur'an tell about the importance of keeping good relationships with parents, kinsmen, orphans and needy and it also commands the believers to spend for them if needed. "Whosoever believe in Allah and the

Last Day should serve his neighbour generously; and whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should entertain his guest generously by giving him his reward.” [Sahih Al-Buhari, Vol. 8, Book 78, The Book of Al-Adab, Chapter 31, 6019, pp. 39]. This hadith communicates the importance of keeping a good relation with the neighbour.

(H) Time Management

Time is the most precious resource in this world. Time never waits for anyone. It’s an interesting fact that we feel that time is too long when we are sad or stressed and too short when we are happy. According to Islam, health and time are the two blessings from Allah, but it is painful fact that it’s most misused blessing too. There are hadith which tells the importance of time and health. “There are two blessings which many people lose: (they are) Health and free time for doing good.” [Sahih Al-Buhari, Vol. 8, Book 18, The Book of AR – RIQAQ, Chapter 1, 6412, pp.80]. Time management is an art of managing time properly and purposefully. Most of the problems related to stress can be managed through managing the time properly at each and every stage of the life. Other methods for managing stress in Islam are reciting Qur’an, forgiveness, letting stressful situation to go, thinking more about the life hereafter, try not to control the situation that we can’t control etc.

IV. CONCLUSION

It is the nature of the human being to regret about their past, anxious about their future and worried about their present. But thinking about the past and future are only the wastage of time and it makes us stressed. According to the Hadith, “narrated Mujahid: ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar (RA) said, ‘Allah’s Messenger (SAW) took hold of my shoulder and said, ‘Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveller.’ The sub-narrator added: Ibn ‘Umar used to say, “if you survive till evening, do not expect to be alive in the morning, and if you survive till the morning, do not expect to be alive in the evening, and take from your health for your sickness, and (take) from your life for your death”.” [Sahih Al-Buhari, Vol. 8, Book 18, The Book of AR – RIQAQ, Chapter 3, 6416, pp. 235].

Islam portrays a simple idea of stress-free life, that is, live in the present moment not in the past or future by enjoying each and every minute within the permissible limit. Prophet suggests to Pray this du’a during the time the distress “None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, the Almighty, the Fore bearing; none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, Lord of the Mighty Throne; none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth, Lord of the Mighty Throne” [Sahih Muslim, Vol.7, Book 48, The Book of Remembrance, Supplication, Repentance and Praying for Forgiveness, Chapter 21, 6921, pp. 103].

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