
GOOD HEALTH

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(Taken from Behishti Zewar)*

Bismihi Ta'ala

Health is a thing which causes a person's mind to be at ease. The result of good health is that a person feels motivated to fulfill acts of ibaadah and do good deeds. When he eats and drinks, he expresses his gratitude to Allah Ta'ala. When his body is strong, he is able to do good work and be of service to others. Furthermore, he is able to fulfil the rights of those who have rights over him. Taking the necessary steps to acquire a healthy body with the abovementioned goals in mind becomes an act of ibaadah and considered to be a religious act. It is more important for women to have knowledge of these things because children are brought up under their care and supervision. Children do not have any knowledge about things that would benefit them or cause harm to them. Rasulullah ﷺ has urged us to take care of our bodies. We are therefore writing a few necessary facts in this regard.

AIR

1. One should wear double (or thick) clothing when it is windy.
2. Do not allow dust and dirt to accumulate in the house. This causes the air to become harmful.
3. Occasionally burn some fragrant substance such as incense sticks, camphor, etc. in the house. During an epidemic, burn incense in every room of the house. Shut the windows properly so that these fragrances are more effective.
4. Keep away from the cold in winter. If you have to have a bath, ensure that you dry your hair immediately.

FOOD

1. Always eat less than the extent of your hunger. If a person takes this into consideration, he will be saved from hundreds of sicknesses.
2. Eat less in spring. Try and fast occasionally as well.
3. Try and eat more "cold" foods such as cucumbers in summer.
4. In autumn abstain from foods which cause an increase in black bile. Such foods include: oil, brinjal, beef, etc.

5. If possible, in winter one should eat foods and medicines that give strength so that one may be saved from many sicknesses throughout the year. Such foods include: half-boiled eggs and gaajar halwa (a sweetmeat made with carrots).
6. As long as there is no real need, do not be in the habit of taking too many medicines. Try and manage minor sicknesses and ailments by reducing the consumption of food or by changing your diet.
7. Do not drink cold water after having eaten hot food as it is very harmful to the teeth.
8. Do not sleep while you are very hungry. At the same time, do not sleep immediately after eating. Allow at least two hours between eating and sleeping.
9. As long as the food is not digested, do not eat again.
10. Don't ever hold yourself when there is a need to relieve yourself. Holding back oneself at such times results in various sicknesses.

WATER

1. Do not drink salty or hot water. Rain water is the best. However, the person who has a cough or suffers from asthma should not drink rain water.
2. If you wish to improve the purity of water, boil it till three quarters of the total is left, allow it to cool, strain it and then drink it.
3. Always cover the utensil which is used to store water.
4. Ice is harmful to the kidney. Women should be particularly cautious in this regard and try not to make a habit of eating ice.

STRESS AND EXERCISING

Do not relax so much that it causes you to gain weight and laziness overtakes you. Don't let it happen that you are found in bed most of the time while leaving your work to others. This is because too much of relaxation affects the fulfilment of domestic tasks and at times also causes sicknesses. At the same time, do not overwork to the extent that you fall ill. Instead, you should use your hands, feet, and the rest of your body in a moderate way. The method for this is that you should do all your work quickly. Abandon the habit of laziness. Adopt the habit of walking in the house for a little while. If there is no fear of anyone seeing you outside, walk around outside. Alternatively, if you live in a double-storey house, go upstairs and come down a few times. However, it is necessary for you to take care of your health. In doing manual work, one remains healthy. Look at those women who work hard in such manual tasks and see how strong and healthy they are. As for those who relax all the time, they are constantly under some medication or the other. Such work is also exercise. Do not engage in any exercise for about three hours after

a meal. When you commence exercising, continue until you begin perspiring or you begin gasping for breath. Once this happens, stop exercising.

1. Make it a habit of waking up early in the morning. In fact, you should try and offer the tahajjud salaah daily. In doing so, one remains very healthy.
2. It is also necessary to engage in some sort of mental work. If one does not take any work from one's brain, this causes an increase in moisture in the brain and one becomes dull. And the person who over taxes his brain and is always in deep thought, causes dryness to his brain which leads to weakness. It is therefore preferable to estimate the amount of work prior to undertaking it. Be in the habit of reading and teaching. Recite the Quraan Shareef daily. Try and read some kitaab or the other. Always think over matters. Do not become so angry that you lose control over yourself. At the same time do not be so tolerant that you are unable to maintain any discipline. Do not become so happy to the extent that you feel that you are not in need of Allah, or to the extent that you forget His power. If He wishes, He can destroy all your happiness in a single moment. At the same time do not become so sorrowful that you forget the mercy of Allah Ta'ala. If you undergo a calamity or affliction, turn your attention towards something else - occupy yourself in some other task.

MEDICAL TREATMENT AND TAWAKKUL

Allah Ta'ala has created a cure for every sickness. It is through Him that the medicine has an effect. If He wishes, the medicine will be beneficial. And if He does not wish, the medicine will not help in any way. Thousands of different medicines may be used but they will not help (if Allah Ta'ala does not wish so). Therefore, one should not have this belief that a certain medicine cures and another does not. It is Allah Ta'ala who cures. If He wishes you to be cured immediately, He will place the cure in that medicine. If not, the medicine will not help. We have been ordered to seek the cure. We do this by placing our full trust in Him. It is for this reason that we make dua to Him alone. However Rasulullah ﷺ had sought medical treatment and also showed us the benefits of certain medicines. It is therefore preferable to seek medical treatment but at the same time the person should exercise patience and express gratitude to Allah Ta'ala. Furthermore, the person should have full conviction that Allah Ta'ala loves us more than what our own mothers love us. Whatever He does is solely for our benefit. When we are afflicted by any sickness, our sins are wiped out. When we exercise patience, our stages are increased and calamities are withheld from us. Whatever pride and arrogance that we may have is decreased and we realise our dependence on Allah Ta'ala. Previously, a person may have been very independent. When he falls ill, he realises his dependence on others for every little thing. When he was healthy and strong, he

may have not valued his health. Once he falls ill, he realises the importance of health, appreciates it and later expresses his gratitude. In short, illness is a source of mercy for us Muslims. In fact, it is a great bounty from Allah Ta'ala. At the same time, it is a great test and trial from Allah Ta'ala. We have to exercise patience, express our gratitude and consider everything to be the decree of Allah. We should not express evil words against Allah Ta'ala and whatever He has decreed. At times such words could cause us to become devoid of Imaan. Just think, that here is the person who has borne so many difficulties (for which he would have been rewarded) but has allowed all the rewards to be snatched away from him. He has spent some money (on medication), but because of the evil words that he has uttered, he lost his Imaan, lost the world, and lost his Deen. If, Allah forbid, he does not repent and passes away in this state, he has lost his entire life earnings of Imaan on account of a little suffering. May Allah save us from this.

On the other hand, if we muster some courage and say to ourselves that if Allah wishes this (sickness) for us, we are prepared to lose this life of ours and we do not utter a single word. If death overtakes us in such a state, what great rewards we will receive from that Being who gave us so much without even asking. How much more He will reward us (on account of our patience)! And if we recover from that sickness, we would regain our health, maintain the rewards that we received (for exercising patience) and also receive great stages (in jannah) - there will be no decrease in all these rewards. At the same time, we will still have our Deen and dunya with us.

When we feel perplexed, why should we not make dua to Allah? He is the one who will inspire the doctor to be attentive towards us. He is the one who will cause the medicine to be effective. And if He wishes, He is the one who can cure us without any medication whatsoever. In short, sickness is a bounty from Allah. However, because there is a great test and trial in it, and because there is the fear of one even losing one's Imaan on account of it, it is not permissible to hope or to make dua for a sickness to afflict us.

TAKING MEDICATION

1. Medication should not be taken for trivial sicknesses. Such sicknesses could be treated by changing one's diet, walking about, change in environment, etc. For example, if you have a headache on account of being in hot air, sit in a place where there is a cool breeze. If your stomach is feeling heavy on account of eating, skip one or two meals. If your head is paining on account of lack of sleep, then go to sleep. If you are feeling lazy on account of excessive sleep, then sleep less. If you engaged in excessive mental work and this resulted in dryness in your brain, reduce your work load and give the brain a rest. When such measures do not help, opt for medication.

2. Do not be distraught irrespective of how serious the sickness may be. By becoming distraught, the entire treatment is affected. Treatment should be sought with great tranquillity and peace of mind.
3. Do not take very strong medication without any real need to do so. The disadvantage of such medicines is that if they are not suited to you, they will cause great harm as well.
4. Do not take haraam and impure medicines, nor should you apply them to your body.
5. If you have to take a particular medicine over a period of time, then occasionally try and skip taking it for one-two days. Alternatively, change it for some other medicine. This is because once you get into the habit of taking a particular medicine, it will no longer have any effect on you.
6. As long as a certain type of food is sufficient, do not opt for any medication.
7. Be extremely cautious when taking any medicine. Ensure that you take it exactly as it has been prescribed. Do not increase or decrease the dose on your own.
8. If you purchase any medicine, show it to the doctor first. If he says that it would be harmful for you, exchange it.
9. When it comes to medication for the heart, kidneys, brain, lungs, eyes, and other delicate organs, do not use medicines that are very strong, that have cold properties, which are assimilated very quickly, or which are poisonous. However, if there is a dire need to use such medicines, there is no alternative but to use them.
10. When seeking treatment, ensure that you go to a doctor who is knowledgeable, experienced, makes a thorough examination, and does not prescribe any medicine without pondering and thinking over the matter. Do not be deluded into going to a particular doctor merely because he is very famous.
11. When ill, consider prevention (or abstinence) to be better than medication. However, if you are absolutely healthy, do not be abstinent. Eat whatever you wish in accordance with the season. However, do not eat more than you can. If your stomach feels "heavy", skip a few meals.
12. Do not change doctors unnecessarily. Keep the doctor happy by carrying out whatever he orders. If you do not gain any benefit from him, do not accuse him. If you give him anything in return for his treatment (either in cash or kind), do not consider yourself to have done him a great favour.