

Scientific Approach Towards Mental Health

Dr. Jayesh J. Sheth

Man is surrounded by many problems in the swiftness of 21st century. Everybody is worried for their 'tomorrow' – the future. This gives a great physical and mental stress to each one of us. We do not have a magic remedy for such troubles, yet it has been scientifically proved that inclusion of prayers, meditation, Yoga, chorale (kirtan) etc. in our daily routine can certainly keep us away from mental botheration and restlessness.

Albert Einstein once told that the upcoming time is very different from the earlier one in several ways. Scientific research has given spectacular successes to this time. But we should not forget that only knowledge and skills cannot give a proud and joyous life to the mankind. The knowledge imparted to us by Lord Buddha, Mahavir, Moses, Jesus, Vallabhaachaarya or Gandhiji is much more than any physical gain or achievement. From centuries, it has been said in Vedas that chanting, meditation, yoga and prayer can only give real happiness or holiness in life; and one can get relieved from several difficulties, deformities or diseases.

Pujya Shri Mota has cured his disease of epilepsy by continued prayer. We see such matters with suspicion since power of prayer is scientifically not established.

According to a research study conducted by a well-known scientist - Andrew Nubarg - at The University of Pennsylvania, prayer, yoga asana and positions after meditation induces various changes in several parts of brain. Following such 'God' favoring practices for long time activates; some neuro-circuits and open-up our empathy towards our surroundings, events and circumstances that change our 'micro-vision' and micro-belief. If we believe the existence of God, our mind gets ready for truth.

Scientists Brook and Lorenz showed in the Journal of Family Psychology (2008) showed that practicing 'Chorale' for eight weeks induces an amazing increase in the efficiency of brain cells known as 'pre-frontal cortex'. This brain portion imparts clarity and concentration to a person. Radioactive brain scans have shown that 'anterior cingulate' becomes more efficient due to prayers and senses become more controlled with improvement in memory and brain development. Moreover, this part of brain becomes more efficient with ageing. Thus prayers protect this part of brain against negative effect ageing.

Increase in activity of 'Prefrontal Cortex' and 'Anterior cingulate' is connected to a

Scientific Approach Towards Mental Health

Dr. Jayesh J. Sheth

reduction in depression along with increase in memory and proficiency. Thus, meditation and prayers can reduce or nullify negative effects of the reduction of metabolic processes of mind and body in diseases like Parkinson's- and Alzheimer's.

It is noted in an another study that eight weeks meditation induces some specific brain circuit that is connected to an increase in efficiency of Prefrontal and Orbital frontal lobe , Anterior cingulate basal ganglia and Thalamus.

This brain circuit directly controls inner mind, mind accuracy, clarity of understanding and connection with reality, non-defective efficiency or efficiency without mistake, sincerity, sympathy, balanced emotional system, anger and fear. A defect or deterioration in this circuit brings in depression, undue excitement, misconduct or mental illness.

In addition, practicing daily meditation of 12 minutes for an individual creates a positive effect on efficiency of his 'Parietal Lobe' and connected to the sense of 'self-consciousness'. The psychoanalysis of Nuns and Buddhists has brought out a truth that 'self' is removed and universal solidarity is gained through meditation. There is a change in ones 'vision' to any 'earthly'

matter and a seriousness of thoughts develops. Thus, it educates an individual to perform a variety of functions with 'neutrality' in adverse situations. This is known as 'Flow' in psychology. Thus, meditation, yoga and prayer nurture an individual's capacity to concentrate. Activeness of cerebellum increases the consciousness and stability of a person. 'Aasanas' (physical postures) and positions performed during yoga are connected to balance and stability of mind. It improves the capacity of deep brain seated basal ganglia and connected to increased memory, good conduct and mental stability.

Thus, practical study of nervous system has proved that meditation increases visual scanning, visual motor co-ordination and visual spatial ability by 50% which is very useful for the mental conditions in children and elderly. Therefore, prayer and yoga are considered to be a part of treatment today in public and private hospitals in the western world. 'Holistic healing' is considered to be a part of treatment instituted by a separate division for the mentally disturbed patients. There is a serious need of implementing such policies in our country.

In the issues of Experimental Brain Research -2007 and European Journal of

Scientific Approach Towards Mental Health

Dr. Jayesh J. Sheth

NeuroScience - 2006, it is shown that deep breathing brought a considerable improvement in students with excitement, frustration, fearfulness or lack of self-confidence. They seem to have considerably improved and progressed to more active state and full of confidence.

Nobel laureate Aric Candil has also proved that development of brain cell never stops but changes take place in the brain cells according to the internal and external conditions of a person. It develops axons of the brain and better communicate between one parts of the brain to the other parts. Meditation changes biological and chemical processes of brain and increases person's skills. The process of chorale include three aspects; breathing, sound and movement. Conscious balanced control of these three aspects reduces mental stress, blood pressure and excitement. On the other hand, an increase in concentration and activity is seen through chanting. A positive, powerful, and harmonious impact on heart beats is fetched through it. The third aspect of the process of chorale –continuous movement of hands and fingers increase brain concentration. Thus, meditation, yoga and chorale increases specific consciousness, efficiency and health of mental circuitry and keep our body and

mind healthy. This remedy is very useful and secure in the modern era of materialism.

Institute of Human Genetics, "Fridge House"
Jodhpur Gam Road, Satellite, Ahmedabad-380015