

## A Prophetic Approach to Pain Modulation in line with the latest advances in neuroscience

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The English terms religion and faith do not do true justice to what Islam really is. As Allah (SWT) states in Surah Ali Imran: “Truly the only religion in the sight of Allah is Islam (3:19).” Deen, the Arabic word loosely translated to religion in this verse, is more than just a set of beliefs or values. It is an encompassing term that denotes a complete way of living. As such, Islam is a perfect way of life that needs not be associated with any other philosophy, ideology, or movement to claim perfection in the morals and values that it preaches. As Allah (SWT) states in the Quran, “ Today I have perfected your faith for you, completed My favour upon you, and chosen Islam as your way (5:3)”. The perfection of Islam could be seen through the lessons that the Prophet Muhammad (S) taught humanity. Amongst the countless practices of outward worship that Muslims strive to emulate are other lessons that the Prophet Muhammad (S) taught to all who listened, and some included medicinal treatments. One such example will be discussed in the following article and is one that ties in with the body’s neurogenic control of pain.

In a hadith recorded in Sahih Muslim 2202, it is narrated, “Uthman b. Abu al-'As Al-Thaqafi reported that he made a complaint of pain to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) that he felt in his body at the time he had become Muslim. Thereupon Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

Place your hand at the place where you feel pain in your body and say Bismillah (in the name of Allah) three times and seven times A'udhu billahi wa qudratihi min sharri ma ajidu wa uhadhiru (I seek refuge with Allah and with His Power from the evil that I find and that I fear).”

This hadith outlines a treatment plan given by the Prophet Muhammad (S) for a person in pain. Part of the plan is to supplicate to God. This aspect of the plan is one that God promises an answer to. He states in the Quran, “Your Lord has proclaimed, “Call upon Me, I will respond to you (40:60).”

The neurogenic concepts of viscerosomatic reflexes and somatosomatic reflexes give rise to the concept of referred pain. Disruption in the viscera (viscerosomatic reflex) or the body (somatosomatic reflex) send afferent fibers to the spinal cord which synapse with interneurons that are also segmentally related to sensations from corresponding dermatomal levels. This causes a sensation of pain in those somatic regions associated with the underlying disorder. A study showed that touch concurrent with activation of AS nerve fibers that modulate pain resulted in significant anesthesia of the region. The researchers proposed a model that the sensation of touch can inhibit the nociceptive signals being sent to the same spinal cord levels (1).

Allah (SWT) writes in the Quran, “If an issue arises over a matter, refer back to Allah and the messenger (4:59).” In the case of pain, the Prophet (S)’s advice to place the hand on the region and supplicate to Allah makes use of human physiology’s innate mechanism to modulate pain and a Muslim’s faith in God.

#### References:

- 1.) Mancini F, Nash T, Iannetti GD, Haggard P. Pain relief by touch: a quantitative approach. *Pain*. 2014 Mar;155(3):635-642. doi: 10.1016/j.pain.2013.12.024. Epub 2013 Dec 18. PMID: 24361816; PMCID: PMC3988987.