



Methodology of Interpreting the Quran Medical Verses

Akbar Aghayani Chavoshi ^{1,*}

¹Islamic Knowledge Group, Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, IR Iran

*Corresponding author: Akbar Aghayani Chavoshi, Islamic Knowledge Group, Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, IR Iran. Tel: +98-2126127251, +98-9121097338, Fax: +98-2126127251, E-mail: Ak_chavoshi@yahoo.com.

ABSTRACT

Medicine is the science that has great religious value and its importance has been emphasized. The Holy Quran in many verses has proposed the issue of body and soul sanitary and treatment. Some of the Quran verses have considered the issue of prevention and treatment of diseases of the human body, and other categories, have discussed the prevention, and treatment of mental illnesses. Using verses from the Holy Quran which have medically important role in physical and mental health in Muslims requires accurate understanding of the medical verses, Since the danger of misconception of verses which occasionally is done for the proving of scientific miracle of Quran verses, is equal to interpretation of vote and this can lead the Muslims to be skeptical to Quran Verses. Interpretation of the medical verses of Quran, sometimes, has been based on extracting all science of Quran due to the lack of a systematic and comprehensive method. This method which has been prevalent between scientists is inappropriate and wrong method. Another common method in interpretation of medical verses is imposition of findings in medical sciences or adopting them with Quran verses. This interpretation was also absurd and improper, because the Qur'an despite some references in the different field of science is not a pure science book to mention all of the science details. This is while Quran is a book of guidance for all the people in the world. Hence, the way to avoid major medical misconceptions in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an, is obtaining the correct method in interpretation of medical verses that is what has been addressed in this paper.

Keywords: Quran; Interpretation; Methodology; Medicine; Medical Verses

Copyright © 2012, Quran & Etrat Center, The Ministry of Health and Medical Education

1. Background

Interpretation method is using special tool or source in interpretation of Quran which makes the meaning and purpose of verses clear and gives the certain results. In other words, "method of interpretation of Quran", is the way of discovering and extracting meaning and purposes of Quran verses (1), And interpretation, is expressing the terms of Quran verses use, and disclose the purpose of God according to Arabic literature and rational principles

of conversation (2). Commentators have interpreted the Quran verses based on the different ways that in one category is a "method to the interpretation of the Quran to Quran, method for interpretation of validity, reference interpretation methods, rational and ijthihad method of interpretation and scientific interpretation method". Interpretation of medical verses is sub-trend in scientific interpretation of the Quran. Hence in the interpretation

►Article type: Discussion; Received: 11 Mar 2012, Revised: 20 Mar 2012, Accepted: 30 Apr 2012; Epub: 26 Apr 2012; Ppub: Spring 2012

►Implication for health policy/practice/research/medical education:

Obtaining correct method and measure for interpretation of clinical signs to avoid misconceptions in medical interpreting of Quran verses.

►Please cite this paper as:

Aghayani Chavoshi A. Methodology of Interpreting the Quran Medical Verses. *Quran Med.* 2012;i(4): 113-6. DOI: 10.5812/quran-med.7989

►Copyright © 2012, Quran & Etrat Center, The Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

The Translated Version of: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5812.quranmed.7989>

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

of medical verses, the interpreter could use all the permitted interpretative techniques fit the verse. The history of scientific interpretation and its growth and development reason should be searched in Islamic teaching and the communication and comprehension of Muslims with the Iran and Roman civilizations. The recommendations of holy Quran and the hadith which were quoted by Mohammad prophet and Imams about the value of science and education created such a fascination among Muslims which helped them to become familiar with different sciences such as medicine, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, etc. in a short period of time and they wrote very valuable books. The translation movement which had began in the Abbasid caliph Mansur Davanyqhy came to prosperity in the era of Mamun. Leading and skilled translators that had been recruited by Mamun, translated the collected works of the Greek, Roman, Coptic, Syriac, Hindi and Pahlavi (3). Translation and compilation of non-Muslims works in different fields and their transfer to the vast Muslim country led to some conflict between some of Quran verses and the new fields (4). Some of Muslim scholars started to fit the verses with natural sciences for proving the legitimacy of Quran verses and expanded the interpretation of scientific Quran verses.

This movement in Islamic countries after 18th century and proposing the conflict between the religion and science accelerated. Therefore in recent century, some of Muslim scholars came out to show that the Quran is not only at odds with modern science, but scientific discoveries prove scientific miracles of the Quran. Therefore, they employed sciences in understanding of Quran and scientific interpretations were written (4).

2. Medicine in Islamic Teachings

About scientific medicine, it has been said "knowing the laws by which human body is examined with respect to its health and lack of it in order to maintain the health of what is possible to achieve" (5). The science of medicine should be considered as the first science that was considered among Muslims and it has spread rapidly. The value and importance of medicine, health maintenance and the necessity of treatment of illness has been emphasized in Islamic teachings. In the Hadith of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), the medicine is in the second position after the science of religion which is the most valuable science: "We have to sciences: science of religion and science of medicine". Imam Bagher has said Jaber Jafy: "be aware that there is no science like the science dealing with health and there is no health like the health of spirit" (6). With respect to the importance of health for body and soul, Imam Ali has said: "One of the troubles is poverty and harder of that is the disease of body and harder of the body disease is soul disease and one of the best property is the financial property and the better of that is the health of body and better of that is piety (6). Also, holy Quran has fo-

cused on the medical issues through some verses and has talked about them. Some verses have discussed about the health of spirit and soul and has stated the way for prevention and treatment of its diseases and other verses, have been considered the physical health and the prevention of its diseases. Embryology, health nutrition, sexual health, personal and social health, etc. are among the topics that holy Quran has talked about. Only in the issue of nutrition, about forty verses invite the humans to use halal food among which can be mentioned to the following verses: verses 23 and 172 of Al-Baqara chapter, verse 88 of Al-Maedeh chapter, verses 99 and 142 of Al-Anam Chapter, verses 10, 11, 66 and 69 of Al-Nahl chapter (7). Right and accurate understanding of this large number of verses which are called medicine verses and vast usage of them in Islam world and beyond that needs obeying the correct method in interpretation of this type of verses which will be mentioned in following.

3. The Correct Method in Interpretation of Medical Verses

Islamic scholars have used in different methods in interpretation of medical verses of Quran such as extracting all fields of sciences from Quran. The followers of this method referring to verses of Quran and some of verses (Appendix 1) believe that Quran include all sciences. Hence, these scholars propose the verses that seem to be consistent with scientific laws and other cases, with interpretation of those verses; they relate the verses to the scientific theories. Ghazali who is the proponent of this view, says: "The Quran contains seventy-seven thousand and two hundred kinds of science because every word is a science and each word has four direction and there are inward, outward and start for each word". He Quotes from Ibn Mas'ud who said: "Whoever seeks the first and last knowledge should reflect in the Quran" (8).

Jalal Din Sabooty who is a Sunni commentators and the author of Jalalin valdar almansoor says: "Allah's book [the Quran] contains everything; about different kinds of knowledge, there is no question unless the implication of that has been noted in Quran" (9). Interpretation of this group of scholars from the verse: "We have sent down to you the book making everything clear" (10) and the hadith that are quoted from imams is not correct interpretation. This is because: first of all the mentioned verse has symmetrical lip i.e. the holy Quran refers to everything which is based on the purpose of Quran and the main purpose of Quran is guiding humans. As a physician who writes a book and says that everything is there, he does not mean that all mathematical sciences, physics and etc. is in that book everything which is related to medical science is his purpose. Secondly, the appearance of this verse and similar verses is unlike improvisation. Since, we can see that in the appearance of Quran verses there are not all the formulas and details of natural sciences (1). The author of Almizan,

also, states this point and states: “the concept of the “everything” is anything that needs guidance about people such as the source of education, eschatology, ethics, others Shray, religions, stories and sermons” (11).

Therefore, such and interpretation ignores the literary conventions, lexical appearances and lexical meaning of words in literacy; so the interpretation is wrong. Another common practice that is common among Islamic scholars is fitting and enforce of scientific theories on Quran. This group of scientists with a firm knowledge of the laws and theories of natural science have tried to gain the verses which are in accordance with the theories and laws of natural science and they impose the matching of those laws and theories with the verses; and, where the outcome is not achieved, the Quran verses are interpreted unlike its apparent meaning and this interpretation which is in fact interpretation of vote and imposes of beliefs on Quran is a void method in interpretation of Quran verses. The owner of the book “Tafsir nemooneh” about this issue says: “there are some who take it too extreme in matching the Quran verses with the least appropriateness based on a series of scientific theories and not the conclusive and real facts and they think that in this way they have given a service in introducing Quran. This is while that is a big mistake. Scientific hypotheses, are constantly changing and the Quran is a proven and fixed fact. Implementing a proven fact, on a series of evolving and changing fact, is not logical, not a service to science and not a service to religion” (12).

The only correct method in interpretation of scientific verses, is extracting science in correct understanding of Quran verses and since Quran verses about medicine is in the group of scientific verses, the correct method for interpretation of this sort of verses is extracting science in understanding the verses. Since, in this way the interpreter tries to take the advantage of the medical assured results which are in agree with the appearance of verses and interpret the verses in this way. Verses that prohibit drinking of wine and carrion, blood and pork and verses that talk about various stages of formation of the fetus in the womb are among the verses understanding and interpretation of which is facilitated by using medical findings. What should be observed by the interpreter in this type of interpretation is that the natural sciences cannot offer a definitive theory because they are related to senses and defective induction. Therefore, the interpreter must abstain from any interpretation of vote and only talks about the probable purpose of the verses.

4. Criteria for the Interpretation of Medical Verses

For interpretation of medical verses, the interpreter in addition to having the essential science for interpretation, some of which are considered to fifteen science (9), should observe the rules of interpretation (13) and

besides using the criteria of interpreting science, observe the following criteria.

1. Medical verses should be interpreted by using certain sciences (assured ones) in medicine
2. Accepted theories in medical science should not be completely ascribed to Quran and the probability should be considered.
3. Since scientific theories are always subject to change, the medical verses should be interpreted according to the theories of medical science.
4. In the interpretation of medical verses, the indication of appearance of verses about the contents of medical science should be clear and there should be no impose on the verses.

4.1. Samples of Medical Verses

4.1.1. Stages of Human Creation

“Then we created of the drop, a clot (of congealed blood) and we created the clot into bite size tissue, then we created the bite size tissue into bones, then we clothed the bones with flesh, and then produced it another creation. Blessed is Allah, the best of creators!” (14).

This verse refer to the four stages of development in the womb that embryology also has found this issue as well.

“We have created the human from a (sperm) drop, a mixture, testing him; we made him to hear and see” (15).

In this verse, it has been mentioned to the mixture of male and female germ and its combination that is today is the knowledge of embryology science.

4.1.2. Nutrition Health

“Eat every kind of fruit, and follow the easy ways of your lord.' from its belly comes forth a drink (honey) of many hues in which there is healing for people. Surely, in this there is a sign for a nation who reflect” (10). This verse focuses on healing effect of honey that medical research has also proven it.

“Children of Adam, take your adornment at every place of prayer. Eat and drink, and do not waste. He does not love the wasteful” (16). In this verse, every human are prohibited from eating and drinking. This sanitary instruction has also proven in medical science, is important factor in creating physical and spiritual health and increasing life span.

“He has forbidden you the dead, blood, and the flesh of swine, also that which is invoked to other than Allah. But whoever is constrained (to eat) any of these, not intending to sin or transgress, incurs no guilt. Allah is forgiving and the most merciful” (17).

This verse mentions to the bad effects of eating carrion, blood and pork. This is something which has been discovered in medical science after years of research.

5. Conclusions

To understand the medical verses of the Quran and correct utilization of them, the interpreter should avoid using interpretive commentary, extracting all science from Quran, imposing the findings of medical science or matching them with Quran verses. While the interpreter should observe the criteria of interpreting science, he should apply the specific criteria for interpreting medical verses; he should only apply sciences in correct understanding of verses.

Acknowledgements

None declared.

Financial Disclosure

None declared.

Funding/Support

None declared.

References

1. Rezaei Esfahani MA. *The Logic of Quran Interpretation* 2. Third version. Qom: Al-Mostafa Community Publication; 2009.
2. Babaei AA. *Methodology of Quran Interpretation*. 1st ed. Tehran: University and Seminary Research Center; 2001.
3. Velayati AA. *Dynamism of Culture and Civilization of Islam and Iran*. 1st version. Tehran: The research and Document Centers; 2004.
4. Rezaei Esfahani MA. *Introduction to scientific interpretation of Quran*. 1st version ed. Qum: Osve publication; 2009.
5. Dehkhoda AA. *Dehkhoda Dictionary*. 2nd ed; Volume 10. Tehran University Publication; 1999.
6. Majlesi MB. *Bahar-al-anvar*. Volumes: 1, 74, 75. Beirut.: Al-vafa institute; 1984.
7. Abbasnejad M. *Quran and Medicine*. . 1st ed. Tehran: Quranic researches of Seminary and University; 2006.
8. Qazali AH. *The Revival of Divine Sciences*. 1st version ed. Halab: Arabic House Awareness; 1998.
9. Sayoot J. *Certainty in Qoranic Science*. Beirut, Lebanon: Scientific Library.
10. Verse 69 & 89, An-Nahl. *Quran-e-Karim, translated by Qarib*.; Available from: <http://www.parsquran.com/data/show.php?sura=16&ayat=%DB%B8%DB%B8&user=far&lang=eng&tran=1>.
11. Tabatabaei MH. *Almizan Quran Interpretation*. 5th version ed. Qom: Islamic Publication Office of Qum Seminary Teachers Community; 1996.
12. Makarem Shrazi N. *Quran and the last Prophet*. 2nd version ed. Tehran: Islamic Library.
13. Moaddab R. *Methods of Quran Onterpretation*. 1st version ed. Qum: Qum University (Eshragh Publications); 2002.
14. Verse 14, Al-Mumenoon. *Quran-e- Karim, translated by Qarib*.; Available from: <http://www.parsquran.com/data/show.php?sura=23&ayat=%DB%B1%DB%B4&user=far&lang=eng&tran=1>.
15. Verse 2, Al-Insan. *Quran-e-Karim, translated by Qarib*.; Available from: <http://www.parsquran.com/data/show.php?sura=76&ayat=2&user=far&lang=eng&tran=1>.
16. Verse 31, Al-Araf. *Quran-e-Karim, translated by Qarib*.; Available from: <http://www.parsquran.com/data/show.php?sura=7&ayat=%DB%B3%DB%B1&user=far&lang=eng&tran=1>.
17. Verse 173, Al-Baqara. *Quran-e-Karim, translated by Qarib*.; Available from: <http://www.parsquran.com/data/show.php?sura=2&ayat=%DB%B1%DB%B7%DB%B3&user=far&lang=eng&tran=1>.
18. Verse 38 & 59, Al-Anaam. Available from: <http://www.parsquran.com/data/show.php?sura=6&ayat=%DB%B8%DB%B3&user=far&lang=eng&tran=1>.
19. Kalini AJM. *Al-osul men Al-Kafi*., Tehran: Islamic Library; 1987.