

using the word prayer in its informal meaning (Doaa) and not the formal meaning (Salatt).

### **The Prophet's guidance on treating epilepsy and spiritual possession\***

In the Sahihan it is narrated that 'Ata bin Raba'h said, "Ibn Ab'ass said to me, 'Should I tell you about a woman from among the people of Paradise?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'That black woman, who came to the Prophet **b** and said, 'I suffer epileptic fits during which I inadvertently take off my clothes. So invoke Allah on my behalf.' He said,

'If you wish, be patient and you will acquire Paradise; and if you wish, I will supplicate to Allah to cure you.'

She said, 'Rather, I will observe patience.' She then said, 'I keep taking off my clothes during these fits, so supplicate to Allah for me that I do not do so. The Prophet **b** supplicated (to Allah) on her behalf.'"

Epilepsy is two kinds, one that results from negative forces and the second type is physical that results from bad mixtures (chemical and material imbalance). The doctors often talk about the second type and explain its causes and how to cure it.

As for the epilepsy that results from negative forces, the best doctors and the wise ones among them affirm that it exists. They In addition confirm that curing this type of disease occurs by the support of the righteous, exalted souls so that they neutralize the effect of the evil and render its efforts harmless. When Hippocrates explained the cures for epilepsy he stated that, "These cures are effective in treating the epilepsy that results from chemical and material causes. As for the epilepsy that results from negative forces, these remedies (that he explained and detailed) do not cure it."

As for the most ignorant, unknowing and immoral doctors, and those who consider heresy a virtue, they deny the type that occurs by negative forces and deny that it has any effect on the body. They have only ignorance to support them, because the medical authorities cannot actually disprove the epilepsy that is caused by these negative forces. Fact and experience assert and prove the existence of this type of epilepsy. That is why when the doctors explain the reason behind epilepsy as being natural or physical, their statement is true regarding some types of epilepsy but not all of them.\*

The doctors of old used to call epilepsy, 'The divine disease', stating that it is caused by negative forces. On the other hand, Galinus and other doctors misinterpreted the term divine ailment, saying, "They

called it divine because it attacks the head and thus causes harm to the apparent divine organ where the brain resides." This explanation, however, resulted from their ignorance of the soul and its effects.

As for the heretical doctors, they only confirm the kind of epilepsy that results from physical causes. Whoever has a sound mind and good knowledge of the soul and its effect, will laugh at the ignorance shown by these doctors and at their weak minds.

Curing the type of epilepsy caused by negative forces has two parts, a part that involves the person afflicted with epilepsy and a part that involves those who treat them.

The part that the person afflicted with epilepsy plays in his treatment involves strengthening his heart and being sincere in repentance to the Creator from the negative forces and seeking sincere refuge with Him both by heart and tongue. This is a type of warfare that the person afflicted with epilepsy engages in against evil. To defeat the enemy, warfare requires the warrior to acquire beneficial, suitable weapons and to have a strong arm. When one of these two elements does not exist, the effort will not be very effective. The situation becomes more difficult when the person is missing both essential requirements, in this case, the heart will be lacking Towhid (Oneness of Allah), Tawakil (trusting in Allah),

Taqwa (righteousness), and Tawajhu (awareness of Allah's Presence), plus the person does not have sufficient material armament.

The second part of epilepsy treatment involves the person who is treating the ailment and who is In addition required to have the same necessary weapons mentioned above. When these weapons are ready, one sometimes merely needs to say (to the evil spirit), 'Get out of him,' or, 'In the Name of Allah,' or, 'There is no power nor strength except with Allah.'

The Prophet **ﷺ** used to say in such cases:

"O enemy of Allah, Depart! I am the Messenger of Allah."

I once witnessed our Shaikh (Ibn Taymiyyah, the renown Imam of Islam) send someone to speak to an evil spirit that had possessed a person, saying, "The Shaikh says this to you: get out of this body for you are not allowed therein." The person afflicted with epilepsy (possession) then woke up from his seizure. Sometimes, our Shaikh would even speak to the evil spirit directly, or would use physical punishment to repel the rebellious evil spirit. When the patient would wake up, he would not feel any pain, as we have ourselves witnessed on numerous occasions. The Shaikh would sometimes read the following Ayah, verse, in the ear of the person afflicted

with epilepsy (possession),"Did not think that We had created you in play (without any purpose), and that you would not be brought back to Us?"

The Shaikh once told me that he read this Ayah, verse, in the ear of the person afflicted with epilepsy and that the evil spirit that possessed him answered by saying, 'Indeed,' extending her voice (mocking the Qura'an). So the Shaikh said, "So I took a stick and beat the sick person on his neck with it until my hands became tired. Those present did not doubt that the patient would die from this severe beating.

While beating the patient, the she-devil said 'I love this person.' I said, 'But he does not love you.' She said, "I want to accompany him to perform Hajj. I told her, 'He does not want to go to Hajj with you.' She said, 'I will leave him in your honor.' I said, "No, but as an obedience to Allah and His Messenger b She said, 'Then, I will leave him alone.' The patient then woke up and started looking around, saying, 'What brought me to the presence of the Shaikh?' They asked him, 'What about the beating you took?' He said, 'Why would the Shaikh beat me while I have not done anything wrong?' He had no idea that he had been beaten."

Further, the Shaikh used to recite Ayatil kors'ey[2:255] and would order those who suffer from and those who cure epilepsy (possession) to recite it along

with the last two chapters of the Qura'an [113 and 114].

In general, no one can deny the type of epilepsy that is caused by negative forces except those who have little knowledge and comprehension. We should In addition state that the majority of those afflicted by the touch of evil spirits are themselves in error due to weak Faith and hearts and tongues that don't remember Allah, they fail to seek refuge with Him and they fail to use Prophetic guidance, (supplications and remedies). The evil spirits find the people that are vulnerable and take advantage of them.

If the truth was uncovered, we would discover that the majority of mankind is under the influence of negative forces which guides the people according to their evil wishes. The people are unable to set themselves free from this control or even oppose it. Most people suffer from this common type of possession (epilepsy), from which the afflicted person cannot wake up. And unless the veil that obstructs their sight is removed, they will not realize that it is they who are actually afflicted by epilepsy. We seek Allah Alone for His help.

Curing (epilepsy) possession that results from the touch of evil requires the cooperation of a sound mind and sincere faith in what has been sent down to the Prophets b Then one would act as if both Heaven and Hell are right in front of his eyes and heart. They would remember that

the people of this earthly life suffer calamities and trials that come down on their homes just as the rain does, all the while being unaware of what is going on around them.

The epilepsy that evil causes is truly severe, but since it touches so many people and is so common, the people are no longer surprised by it. Since they are so many, it is strange to see someone who is not touched by it.

When Allah wills that a certain slave should acquire what is good for him, that slave will wake up from these fits of epilepsy and will realize that the children of this life are suffering from epilepsy. He will discover that some of them have surrendered to insanity and that some of them might briefly recover from a bout to fall back into another bout soon after. Some of them would be awake from a bout and would act like sane people, but when he falls into another bout, he would act confused. [This is the state of those who do not have the correct Faith.]

### **The epilepsy that results from physical causes**

This type of epilepsy alters the constitution and is accompanied by spasms that prevent the limbs from functioning normally or from normal movements. The physical or constitution related epilepsy occurs due to the accumulation of thick, viscous substances near the brain