

Mental patients should be treated as human beings and their illness should be accepted as physical illness. In this respect, family education is very important because its active involvement along with doctors and psychologists in treating mental patients, can ensure patients overcome their plight, suggests **Azmat Rasul**

"Mind can turn hell into heaven and heaven into hell," writes Milton in his great epic *Paradise Lost*.

Head, without any shred of doubt, is of most significant among body parts because it controls the whole body. Every action of our body is directed and controlled by brain so our honour, success and every virtue depends upon the health of our mind. One may have a very healthy body but without mental health physical well being it is worthless.

One can be recovered fully from a physical problem but it is difficult in case of mental problem. Like physical ailments mental diseases are also frequent in every society but the treatment rendered is different. The most important thing is the behaviour of society towards its mentally challenged people. The behaviour of society not only affects the rehabilitation process of its mentally challenged people but also tells about the mental health of the society as well. We have no other way except admitting the fact that our society is not very much friendly and considerate towards its psychiatric population.

Firstly, we by and large, turn no attention towards rehabilitation of such people and neglect them that results in further dilapidation of their personalities. Secondly, we are in a cruel habit of calling them mental and insane. Whereas these sufferers should not be neglected or teased because they are our responsibility, we should be very kind and considerate towards them. They tell us the significance of brain as well as of



Illustration by Khalid

Mind can turn hell *Health News 28.6.02* into heaven

graciousness of God Almighty. Those who mock at such people, tease them, give them no significance and do not treat them as patients, should think at least for a while what would have been their situation, had they not been bestowed with mental health by God Almighty.

Unlike physical problems, mental diseases cannot be cured only by medicine but a friendly and kind behaviour of society can be much helpful to rehabilitate them. The role of doctors and psychologists is of a protagonist in the treatment of these people.

Like other fields of life, we are far behind the West in our social attitudes and responsibilities. We are still in habit of calling such people Pagal and the mental hospitals are very commonly call Pagal Khanas. These derogatory terms indicate our behaviour towards mentally ill people. Whereas in the West they have changed these types of derogatory terms. They call a mentally one as mentally challenged person and they have named their mental hospitals as Club Houses.

In these club houses patients are provided with home like atmosphere to restore their lost

esteem. Families of such patients are not allowed to dump the patients in these new type of mental hospitals rather a new technique 'Family Therapy' is used by which family is taught the methods of handling and treating the mental patients. Psychologists with the help of families gradually develop among patients their lost respect, skills, good and rational thinking and behaviour.

The foremost thing is that mental patients can never be restored to health unless doctors, psychologists, family and society treat them gently and work collectively to make these sick ones effective citizens.

While we are looking for the faculties which can be helpful in restoring one's mental health, these are mainly family, society, doctors and psychologists, but the role of families in the treatment of mental patients is much significant because they at first hand recognize such patients and take them to doctors and psychologists. Doctors and psychologists should be competent enough to apply multi kinds of therapies like religious therapy, music therapy, social skill therapy, behaviour modification therapy and cognitive therapy

besides necessary medicines.

After the treatment and restoration of health, these patients are again at the disposal of family and society but it's a matter of great pain that they are usually called and dealt with by society as secondary category citizens, which is not fair as the cured ones cannot remain healthy in long run unless provided with respect and courage by the society

Our main concern should be mental health of whole nation. Government can not only help ill ones to retain their mental health but can help normal ones to maintain their mental health. It is a good news these days that govt is planning to promulgate what it claims to be forward-looking ordinance on mental health to replace the antediluvian Lunacy Act on Feb 20, coinciding with the World Mental Health Day.

Besides these laws and ordinances government should really have to take solid steps for eliminating those factors which have been turning absolutely normal Pakistanis into demented individuals at an alarming rate. This is an important issue requiring a collaborative govt-society efforts. If we really want to see our generations mentally healthy we have to change our attitudes. Government and society have to work shoulder to shoulder to improve and retain nation's mental health.

Send your suggestions to
Incharge Focus at:
am616@hotmail.com

In an interview to a Malaysian news paper on 9th June 2002, the President General Pervez Musharraf said the burden of responsibility had taken its toll and he had given up playing squash and tennis over a year ago. More revealing, "I got a frozen shoulder for the last few months. So I only go walking. I walk for about 45 minutes and then I swim. I do about 14 laps breaststroke." The President did not say how long it takes him to swim the 14 laps. That may be a national secret. No wonder the TV does not cover the President's swimming capabilities. But in this interview the President has let out a lot on what's happening and what is in store.

For better understanding, let's put things in their proper perspective. Some examples may help. The nation's leadership is very loose in matters vocal. But once in a while, if you keep your antenna up, you become privy to exceptional inside knowledge. It's like bird watching. After sometime, you know which bird is giving what call for what purpose and which dance means what?

Remember, when Nawaz Sharif's stay, in the clink over at Attock, became boringly long and we heard that he was down with heartache. The uninitiated were saddened at the prospect. For those in the know, the message was, "I long to meet you, to do a deal". The powers that be paid no attention. So, Kulsoom Nawaz interjected, "My husband has heart problem. The regime is trying to kill him by denying him medical help. We are willing to pay for all the medical expenses" Ap-

The nation's health bulletin!

health Nation 18-5-02

Moneir Aslam

Mr Rafiq Tarar really specialized in giving us the national health picture aptly.

palling news. Is this how they treat a former Prime Minister? Real message, "My husband wants a meeting. Does not want to stay in the prison for life. Will willingly pay whatever it takes to get him out." Now this got the government really interested. So, he met, he paid and he flew out! May he stay out of trouble forever and ever.

Qazi Hussain Ahmed also specializes in giving out health bulletins. Being kept out of trouble for the success of Operation Enduring freedom Qazi Sahib let out a steady stream of messages. No response, since he showed no seriousness. For serious business talk, you have to bring in the heart term. So, we heard that his heart had started to hurt. Logical outcome—from the rest house sub jail he journeys to hospitals in Peshawar and Lahore and ends up at Mansoor. If one may ask, do marathon speeches and traveling the length and breadth of the country, the ideal medical remedy to get an ailing heart back to its youthful ticking?

Our Foreign Minister Sattar Saab, of late, had been dropping diplomatic hints that he was willing to go, if needed, but no one took him seriously. Those in the race for that coveted slot, however, did. Could that be the reason why Mr. Shaher Yar Khan's clean reputation was needlessly sullied in the messy Bhopal House handling at Karachi

(Even the worst of enemies affect a truce to ensure the dignity of the burial rites of the departed—a privilege, alas, not afforded to the former Foreign Secretary.)

Mr. Sattar then tried Track Two Diplomacy and got his nose operated at Lahore. He wrote to the President that the post-operative medication gave him such a high that he could not keep late hours at the office. Before the President could reply, in a press leak, that tipped our Washington Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi as FM, she was asked for her comments. She graciously and sensibly declined. Those who planted the leak perhaps forgot, that her brother's absconding reputation had to be set right first, notwithstanding her impeccable and consistently positive performance. So, are there any takers for the post of FM for the quarter ending Oct 2002. In the meanwhile, a fond

farewell, then, for Sattar Saab. We will miss you. And your Lyse Doucet pronouncement.

The President's predecessor, Mr. Rafiq Tarrar (Remember?) really specialized in giving us the national health picture aptly. Ever so often, and without requesting that he be allowed to speak, he would make known where we stood at critical junctures. Once, he went visiting the Neuro Surgeon, Combined Military Hospital Rawalpindi. Message:—"The nation has gone nuts"! Another time, he honored the Armed Forces Institute of Dentistry. Message—"The nation has lost its teeth. Get this Gowalmandi brat out." And finally he made it to Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology with a heart problem. Real message, "The nation's heart is tired of the Gowalmandi boys. My heart is with you, the khakis". Now this finally got the Pindi boys interested and pepped up for the football game. May we respectfully record, that the khaki boots kicked the troublesome ball so hard that not only did it accurately zip through the goal posts; it also tore a hole through the nets, and flew onto Saudi Arabia. That's one ball out of the game. Also, while the Saudis gaze at that ball in their Royal museum, they're wondering, if the Pakistanis are so good at shooting footballs to their country, how come they didn't make it to the World Cup Football?

Now, that brings us back to the present President's medical bulletin. "He's got a frozen shoulder, for the last few months", but did not say which one, it being obvious that the nation's right shoulder stands frozen for the foreseeable future. (It will take a change in the international climate to defrost the right shoulder. May the weather gods intervene soon!) Next, "So, I only go walking." Meaning, I am only thinking and pondering. "I walk for about 45 minutes and then I swim." Real meaning, I am thinking about that 45 political parties or the 45 Prime Ministerial hopefuls. "I do about 14 laps breaststroke." Real message, 14 political parties or 14 prime ministerial hopefuls are closer to my heart.

So, in the countdown to the October polls, if the President scales down his walking time and reduces his breaststroke laps, we would know that the process of political elimination is on. On the other hand, if he opts for longer walks and more laps in the swimming pool, it would be obvious that it's a level political playing field for all and sundry.

Think about it, Mr. Prez. All eyes are keenly watching how well you exercise in the coming months, for the nation's good health. Take long walks and spend more time in the swimming pool doing your breaststroke laps. Since you have given up playing squash and tennis already, may we deferentially recommend, that you give up football too? We'll love you all the more for it. And come October, we would all be able say our "Cheese", willingly and smilingly to the cameras of posterity!