



Public Health in Islamic Law: The Balance between Soul and Body

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Abstract

This paper searches for the application of public health in Islamic law, discussing the need to balance spiritual and bodily health. Islam takes into consideration that health is all-encompassing in the sense of including mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions to human flourishing. The study, through a scrupulous analysis of verses of the Holy Quran, Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence, sought to demonstrate how Islamic teachings are on Health Preservation, Environmental Conservation, Disease Prevention, and Maintenance as well as Lifelong Responsibility. Key practices such as prayer and hygiene are. The benefits of moderation are evoked with an apparent relation towards both body and soul and the elicitation of strength. The paper also reveals the involvement of family and society's contribution to health while putting considerable weight on co-responsibility for the creation of supportive environments. There is also a recommendation to encourage individuals and communities to adopt Islamic principle-aligned practices on public health. Such a balanced strategy will demonstrate a way not only to take care of the physical body but will be the kind of model that, perhaps, may enhance personal and collective well-being.

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Introduction

Public health in Islamic law presents the thorough taking up of cleanliness and stresses the influence of psychological and religiously associated cleanliness. Islam stresses that a good body and spirit is more than just self-desire but the greater desire of most individuals in society. Influences of Islam that can be traced from the Qur'an and Hadith toward a healthy practice, prevention of disease, and maintenance of the body-cum-soul relation begin to talk about everything concerning hygiene, diet, exercises, sanity, and praying methods toward general well-being. There are Islamic perspectives on health that consider the equilibrium wherein psychological development is given equivalent attention to spiritual growth since both these elements are then seen as ways of fulfilling one's devotion to Allah as well as society. Public health is viewed from a holistic angle by Islamic considerations. Islamic legislation is looked at as recommending a balanced approach to full health. The paper purports to show how Islamic tenets can edge individuals and societies toward more wholesome and fulfilling lives that are anchored in faith as well as physical care.

The concept of public health in Islam

In Islamic belief, a very important place is assigned to such a vitally important position as public health which must be based on the principles of human life preservation, non-harm, and benefit. Teaching of Islam puts into action an integrative way concerning the healthy life and the community preventing the community from the different infectious and non-communicable diseases as well as other threats for the community, where every single individual is perceived as a healthy manifestation of

spirituality and moral responsibility for others. Islam highly regards cleanliness, a balanced diet, mental peace, and prevention of disease, clearly stating that health is a blessing from Allah and a trust that must be taken care of. Islamic Public Health is based on the principles of Shariah life being one of the five essentials of life namely faith, progeny, intellect, and wealth. The first major onus regarding this matter is health preservation which plays a major role in attaining these essentials, for a healthy body and mind can perform proper religious as well as social. There are two blessings, which many people lose: (They are) health and free time for doing good (Al-Jawziyya, 1998) ^[5]. This shows how much value Islam puts on health as a real asset to be in the center of worship and contribution to the community.

Besides the religious instructions, Islam also gives people some important practical principles related to this case. One very good example is the rule about hygiene since before every prayer, a person should wash first of all his/her hand, face, and feet and then complete Wudu. Doing so many times each day is a great early example of preventive health and stops many infectious diseases from spreading. The system of Tayyibat, which means pure and allowed food, brings

home the bacon for Muslims to consume clean and nutritious food which is one of the essentials for physical health preservation. Moderation on its own as a principle according to the dietetic recommendations of the Qur'an and Hadith helps to lead a moderate lifestyle that isn't full of excesses (An-Nawawi & bin Syarof, 2010) ^[6]. Community Obligation or Responsibility in Islam's public health ethics involves Fard Kifayah where if certain individuals solve a problem in a society, the rest are not liable to it. This principle develops a need for united work in the field of medicine and healthcare. Historically, Islamic societies had established hospitals and ensured facilities for every individual. This in broader terms was known as paying careful attention to social welfare (Akrami *et al.*, 2018) ^[2]. At times of pandemics or outbreaks of infections, Islam itself contains advice on the control of such diseases. For example, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says, "If you hear that the plague has broken out in a land, do not go to it; and if it breaks out in a place you are already in, do not leave that place." The very idea of keeping people indoors quarantining healthy individuals reflects the proactive approach of Islam in safeguarding public health from disease spread (Lestari & Arumi, 2024). See Figure 1.

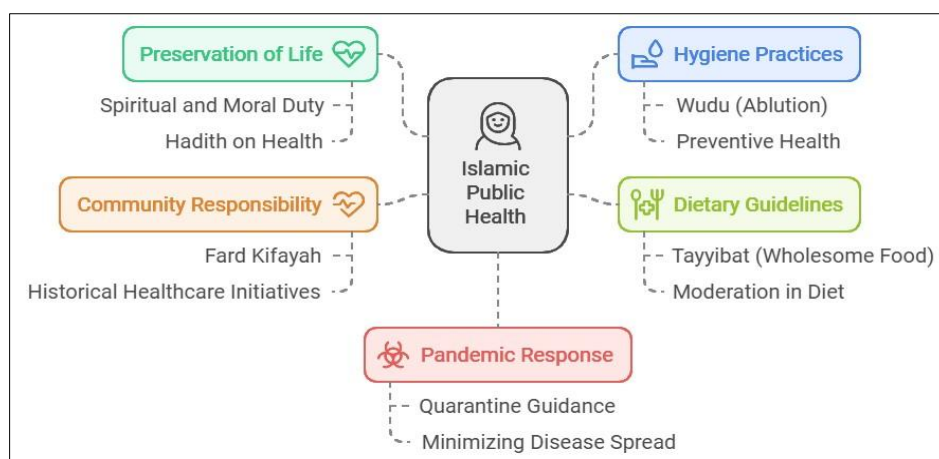


Fig 1: The Concept of Public Health in Islam

Thus, in a nutshell, Islam correlates public health to moral and spiritual duties, calling for complete care by ensuring provisions are made not only for the physical but also the spiritual side of humanity. All these things said concerning cleanliness and good dietary and community consciousness are ways through which Islam presents a workable framework on health from public perspectives in contemporary times.

The Balance between the Body and the Soul in Islamic Law

Balance between the body and the soul is one of the essential teachings in Islam, stressing that a man has to be healthy not only in a physical aspect but in a spiritual one as well. Islam recommends that believers should live in a way that will balance what the body needs with what the soul's spiritual values require as well as moral values; it introduces a rounded approach to human life (Auda, 2022) ^[8]. The body is considered a trust from God and must, therefore, also have its proper maintenance, its nutrition, and exercise for its health

so that it may carry out its functions in matters related to religion and worldly matters. Hence, much of what Muslims are supposed to do is health-promoting and prevention of ailments through balance in diet, exercise, avoidance of hazardous habits like alcoholism, and drug addiction. The first provision of rule, and this is cleanliness and sanitary principle among Muslims carry the weight of its practical and healthful body as worship and reverence for God's creation (Koenig & Al Shohaib, 2014) ^[15]. Comparatively, in Islamic spirituality, it is the soul or ruh that plays a vital role and its dignity is accepted as binding upon individuals. They refine their souls by modes of worship like prayer, keeping fast, and almsgiving so that they might use such patient to attain closeness to God as well as his lucidity. They prepare the soul to hear sound moral reason and divine revelation (Machouche *et al.*, 2019) ^[18]. By this way of life, Muslim's acquire modesty, forgiveness, and self-discipline which are in harmony with an inner self but with the help of moral reason and divine law. See Figure 2.

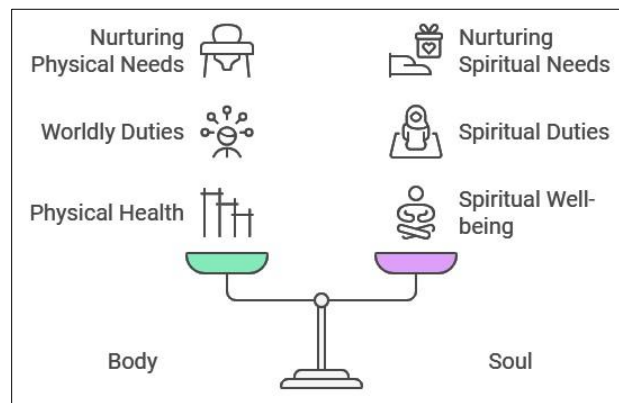


Fig 2: Balancing Body and soul in Islamic

Islamic principles advocate for a balanced approach where neither the body nor the soul is neglected. Striking this balance is essential to achieving a harmonious life that fulfills both worldly responsibilities and spiritual aspirations. This equilibrium is seen as vital for personal growth, ethical development, and ultimately, success in this life and the hereafter. Through this integrated approach, Islam encourages believers to lead purposeful, balanced lives that reflect the values of compassion, responsibility, and spiritual enlightenment.

Nutrition and Moderation In Eating and Drinking

Balanced nutrition and moderation in eating and drinking are fundamental values advocated by Islamic teachings due to their great importance in maintaining human health and well-being. The Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah address the topic of food from a comprehensive perspective aimed at promoting physical and mental health, preventing diseases, and achieving a healthy balance in a person's life. Allah Almighty refers to this concept in the verse: *"And eat and drink, but do not be excessive"* (Al-A'raf: 31), a verse that summarizes the Islamic philosophy regarding food and drink. Moderation in eating and drinking means that a person consumes food and drink within the bounds of sufficiency, without excess or deficiency, so that the body is supplied with the necessary nutrients without being burdened with an overload that could lead to health issues. Islam encourages moderation and forbids extravagance due to its harmful effects on the body, whether these are diseases caused by excess, like obesity and high blood pressure, or complications that hinder a person's ability to carry out daily activities efficiently (Kim *et al.*, 2021) [14]. The Sunnah of the Prophet also emphasizes this guidance. The Prophet said: *"No human ever filled a vessel worse than his stomach. Sufficient for any son of Adam are a few bites to keep his spine straight. But if he must (fill it), then a third for his food, a third for his drink, and a third for his breath"* (Narrated by Al-Tirmidhi). This hadith gives a smart prophetic direction toward moderation in food consumption since a person is recommended to leave space for breathing after eating and drinking so the body can perform its vital functions without strain.

Thus, the nutritional value should be well balanced so that it can provide a wide variety of essential food nutrients like vitamins, minerals, proteins, and carbohydrates which are the functional requisites of the body. A varied diet having all these nutrients in appropriate quantity helps to raise the body's defense, mental efficiency, and physical power. So, overindulging in foods high in fats and sugars leads to excess

fat in the body and causes diseases problems such as obesity-related diseases like diabetes and heart disease (Smolin & Grosvenor, 2019) [32]. Finally, it is nutrition that is balanced by eating moderation and supportive of good digestive health since adequate intake for the body without overindulging provokes no signs of indigestion or bloating related to digestion problems. Besides maintaining an ideal body weight, this reduces the chance of developing irreversible diseases chronic conditions and eventually provides room for an active and radiant life (Öztürk & Ayhan, 2024) [27]. From another angle, Islam encourages gratitude for the blessing of food and discourages extravagance as a form of thankfulness to Allah for His blessings. Allah says: *"Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils"* (Al-Isra: 27). Wastefulness and excess are not only harmful to human health, but they are also considered unacceptable behaviors both religiously and socially moderation in eating and drinking is not merely a health directive; it is a lifestyle that aligns with human nature and achieves the necessary balance in our lives. This moderation contributes to enhancing the health of both individuals and communities, reducing healthcare costs that may arise from chronic diseases associated with poor nutrition (Czuber-Dochan *et al.*, 2020) [9]. See Figure 3.

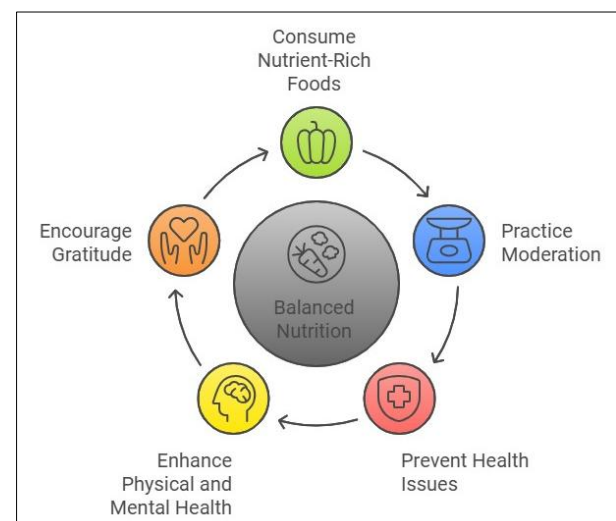


Fig 3: Balanced nutrition and moderation

It becomes clear that balanced nutrition and moderation in eating and drinking are among the pillars of health highlighted by Islam, reflecting its commitment to the physical and mental well-being of individuals.

Cleanliness and purity in Islam

According to Islam, cleanliness is next to purity and is very good for personal as well as public health in general. The focus on cleanliness is not therefore just a religious necessity, but a means of safeguarding the body. Every Muslim has a spiritual attitude towards cleanliness, which enables them to lead a very clean personal life. For example, they are supposed to keep their bodies clean through the practice of ablution (wudu') and full-body purification (ghusl) that are done frequently, especially in the daily prayers (Osim & Eteng, 2021) [26]. Ablution, known as wudu', is the ritual washing of the hands, mouth, nose, face, arms up to the elbows, head, and feet performed before prayer. Such rituals are believed not only to cleanse the soul from sin but also offer excellent hygiene since they eliminate dust as well as harmful microorganisms from the body (Gonzales & Limjap 2026). Ghusl refers to full-body purification that is done once physical impurity enters the body or not later than the evening or before going for their Friday prayers (Raziq *et al.*, 2024) [30]. Islam teaches individuals general cleanliness in their surroundings and their dress code as well as what they take in as food. Islamic teachings promote these habits and hence lower the susceptibility level to diseases, infections, and/or any other health-related issues that come as a result of poor hygiene. While stressing personal hygiene, Islam also advocates for the cleaning of public amenities and has directives that are geared to make the sources less polluted, such as no littering or defiling water sources (Nik Din *et al.*, 2022) [25]. He emphasized cleanliness by saying that 'cleanliness is half of faith.' This teaches that Islamic belief is concerned with the spiritual and physical well-being of individuals regarding purity (Maigari, 2016) [19]. In return, they do not only satisfy a religious duty but also boost their general body immunity and reduce the transmission of infectious diseases. See Figure 4.

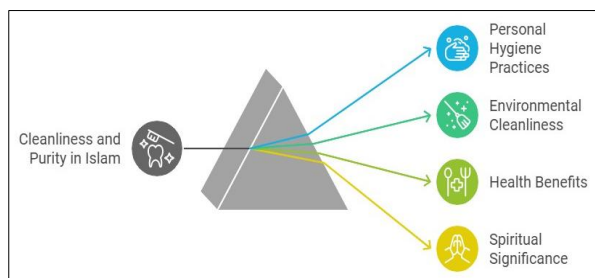


Fig 4: The multifaceted role cleanliness in Islam

In conclusion, Islam's guidance on cleanliness and purity illustrates its comprehensive approach to health and hygiene, underscoring the importance of maintaining both spiritual and physical purity to support a healthy, harmonious life.

Disease prevention

One of the main principles of Islam is the precautionary principle, and it requires that one's health should be protected from any harm or that harm should be avoided. As such, several of the precautionary measures that are recommended have to do with maintaining a clean environment/personal hygiene, observance of healthy lifestyles, and quarantine when necessary for isolation in order to contain an outbreak. Health is something which is perceived as a worthwhile possession—an asset that has to be taken care of and obligation has to be assumed over. Respectively, one of the most

relevant matters concerning the preventive teaching of diseases is quarantine. "The condition laid down by Muhammad upon the sick person that 'no sick person should be taken into the presence of one who is healthy' is first-class quarantine" (Al-Bukhari, 2013) [3]. Similarly, Islam supports some hygienic behaviors that usually lead to the prevention of diseases, such as cleanliness and handwashing to prevent waste management, and performing 'wudu' (ablution) prior to prayers, which involves cleaning hands, face, feet several times in a day hence reducing the likelihood of contracting infections. Yet, Islamic teachings stress the potential peril to the community by using purified water wells and building facilities for waste disposal and thus reflects modern public health measures. Let no one go out of or come into the infected places—I would also advise not leaving that particular place in which ye shall happen to be when tidings have come unto you of its being infected. I say this is somewhat like preventive restrictions or social distancing or the community control measures as is advocated as a stopover for epidemics. The travelers can escape a plague at any rate if they avoid coming near places where there is such an outbreak or upon whom the angel of death has already passed by leaving an infected area only if it becomes necessary, before the plague has time to develop in the air of that place (Haque *et al.*, 2016). See Figure 5.

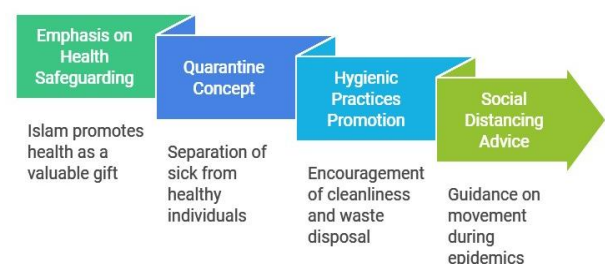


Fig 5: Islamic Disease Prevention Practices

Thus, the Islamic teaching from the angle of disease prevention depicts a cautious approach to health for the sake of society and paying regard for public health stressing the need for such forms of precaution even in this day and age.

Sports and physical activity in Islam

Sport and general physical activity have been allocated a special place in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad was an enthusiast of exercising in whatever form that would make the body strong and keep it healthy, from activities like swimming, and shooting to riding. This was thought to be as efficient for health improvement and body strengthening so that the imposed religious duties for Muslim's daily tasks could easily be performed. The Prophet indirectly attached an unnoticed significance to physical strength in many of his sayings, e.g., "A strong believer is better, and more loved by Allah than a weak one though good is in both." (Muslim) Thus importance of health and physical strength are recommended to be preserved and upheld through some physical activities. Sports can prevent several diseases and particularly such common diseases as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and excessive fat content in the body will also go away which will also boost a good mood and low stress for better mental health (Walseth & Fasting, 2003) [35]. See Figure 6.

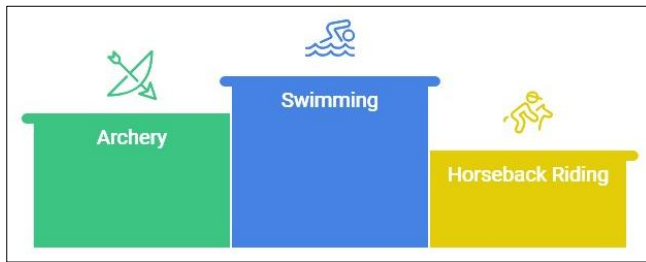


Fig 6: Sports Encouraged In Islam

Healing and the use of medicine in Islam

In Islam, seeking treatment and using medicine are highly encouraged, reflecting a balanced approach to physical and spiritual well-being. Islam views health as a blessing, and taking care of one's health is a responsibility. The Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of seeking treatment, saying, *"Seek treatment, O servants of Allah, for Allah has not created a disease except that He has also created its remedy"* (Sunan Ibn Majah). This hadith highlights a fundamental principle: every illness has a cure, and Muslims are encouraged to seek out these cures as part of their faith and trust in God's wisdom (Syed, 2003)^[3]. Islam does not view seeking medical treatment as contrary to reliance on Allah (tawakkul). Rather, it is a part of taking action while placing ultimate trust in Allah's will. The act of seeking medicine or any form of treatment aligns with the Islamic values of preserving life, relieving pain, and

promoting overall well-being. Muslim scholars interpret the encouragement to seek medical treatment as a sign that medicine and healing practices are compatible with Islamic teachings (Rahman, 2015)^[28]. Several key points arise from Islamic teachings on medicine and healing:

- **Seeking Treatment is Recommended:** Islam promotes the use of available treatments to maintain health, as neglecting one's health could impact one's ability to fulfill religious and personal duties.
- **Balance between Faith and Medicine:** Relying on medical treatment does not contradict faith; rather, it complements it. Seeking treatment, with faith in Allah's decree, reflects a holistic approach to health.
- **Use of Permissible Remedies:** Islam encourages using lawful (halal) treatments. The use of prohibited substances is generally discouraged unless deemed necessary by qualified medical professionals.
- **Role of Healthcare Professionals:** The contributions of physicians and healthcare providers are highly valued. Islam acknowledges the importance of medical knowledge and encourages advancements in medicine. Islam promotes a balanced view of health, emphasizing the use of medicine and treatments alongside faith, and understanding that health and healing are part of God's mercy and wisdom (Arozullah *et al.*, 2020)^[7]. See Figure 6.

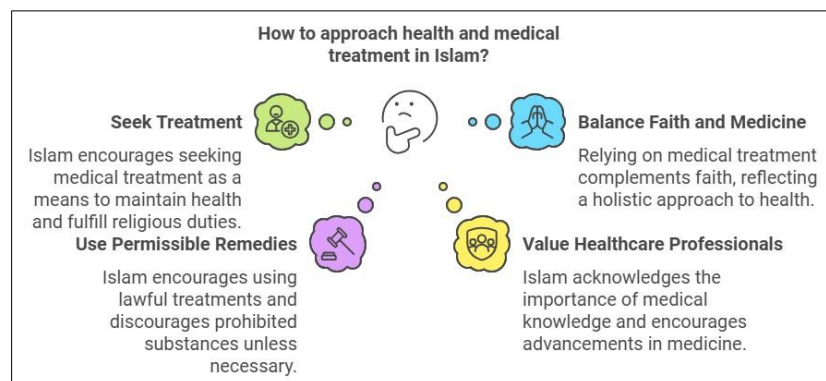


Fig 6: Healing and the Use of Medicine In Islam

Mental Health in Islam

Mental health holds a significant place in Islam, as it contributes to the overall well-being of individuals and communities. Islam emphasizes the importance of psychological stability and spiritual peace, both of which are achieved through remembrance of Allah, prayer, and supplication. These practices are seen as vital sources of inner peace, providing comfort and resilience during times of stress and difficulty. The core of mental health in Islam is based on some basic concepts one of which is tranquility or in other words-sakina. The Quran states that only through continuous remembrance of Allah true peace could be attained- *"Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest"* (Quran 13:28). The constant communication with and remembrance of the Almighty can help a Muslim achieve spiritual peace and detachment from the concerns of this world. It can further be argued that it helps to direct the purpose which in return

leads to the wellbeing of mental status (Keshavarzi *et al.*, 2020)^[13]. Among the obligatory acts of Islamic worship prayer, in Islam, occupies a distinct place due to its significance for mental health. Besides Salah, there is Du'a personal supplication which plays a great role in mental wellbeing. This allows a person to express in his own language that he fears, hopes, and desires. This form of spiritual reflection tends to remind people that they have company in their tribulations and they have always an open ear to listen to, namely Allah (Fakhr El-Islam, 2008)^[10]. Another critical determiner of mental health in Islam has to do with building a support system. In Islam, believers are encouraged to show compassion, be of support, as well as seek support where necessary. This support system helps underscore the importance of emotional well-being, creating a sense of belonging, and positively impacting mental health (Koenig *et al.*, 2012)^[16]. See Figure 7.

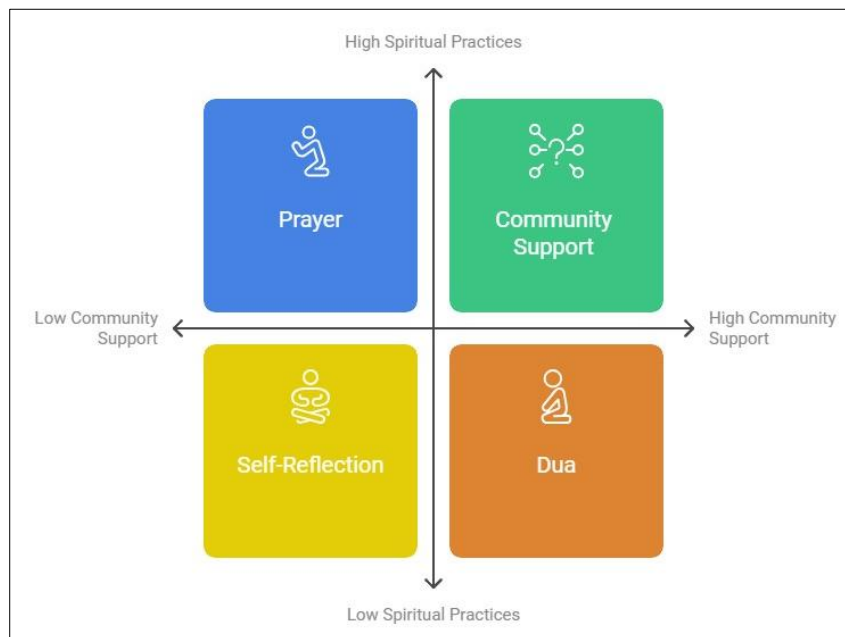


Fig 7: Islamic Approaches to Mental Health

In conclusion, Islam is a complete way for the mental betterment of an individual that includes spirituality, community support, and self-reflection. All of these increase an individual's resilience and enhance his quality of life and improve his overall way of being.

Islamic guidelines on environmental health

According to the Islamic viewpoint such that suggested as above, one can argue that effective health measures and environmental stewardship represent two aspects of one comprehensive cause, care for Earth. The religion not only emphasizes nature conservation, cleanliness, and a healthy ecosystem as worshiped by its devotees but also as an obligation towards upcoming generations. The most basic natural resource recommended in this most sacred scripture and by the example of the Prophet Muhammad known as Sunnah is water. "Do not waste water, even if performing ablution on the bank of a flowing stream," has been stated by the Prophet showing how important water conservation is. This hadith brings to light the importance of water being a peculiar resource that has not to be thrown away and polluted. Nor does it allow pollution of any form in water, air, or land all of which Muslims believe are trusts from God (Muktaruddin *et al.*, 2023) ^[22]. Incidentally, planting trees has been recommended in the Islamic religion as well. One hadith relates that the Prophet said, "If a Muslim plants a tree, or sows seeds and from them, a bird, or a person, or an animal takes his or its food, this will be regarded as a charity on his behalf" (Sahih Bukhari) ^[3]. This emphasizes the necessity of contribution to the environment; because planting trees offers sustenance and beauty, and is the remedy for environmental challenges (Rosita *et al.*, 2023) ^[31]. Cleanliness, which represents another core beginner in Islam extends beyond personal hygiene to public and environmental hygiene. Muslims are supposed to keep their environment free from waste and pollution since they understand cleanliness to be a major requirement in health and a central part of faith. It also involves taking care of public spaces and not doing anything that may affect the environment or even someone's health (AbdelZaher *et al.*, 2011) ^[1]. See Figure 8.

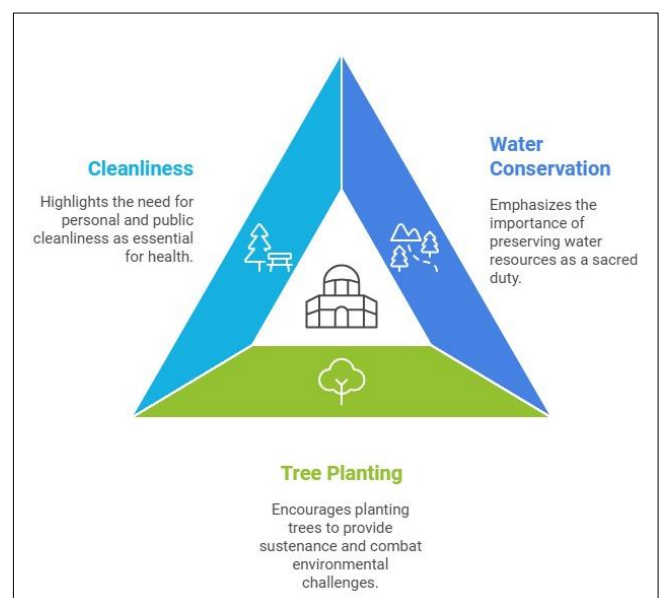


Fig 8: Islamic Environmental Conservation Stewardship

As can be inferred from these pointers, Islam expects an equilibrium and respectful relation with nature. Being environmentally friendly falls under the general Islamic principles of empathy, duty, and appreciation, adding to one's as well as the community's prosperity.

The role of family and community in promoting public health

Family and society are the other essential components of the 'whole' contributing to a culture of well-being and responsible health behaviours. According to Islam, the family becomes the primary institution where health-related values are inculcated in the family members. They advise parents to teach their children about nutrition, the right food to eat, exercises, and cleanliness. In so doing, children become responsible for their health and that may lead to lifelong healthy life (Wakefield & Poland 2005; Ezzerouali *et al.*, 2024) ^[34, 23]. After the family, the community is another part

of ensuring that a healthy atmosphere has been put in place. This involves creating public places that are active-friendly, have access to healthy foods and clean air and water. Muslims have always been reminded of unity and cooperation within a society as potential members of reviving the healthy atmosphere in community's shared but collective duty. Such amenities as parks, health care facilities, and the learning of healthy behavior in schools by educating children about good and bad health practices constitute just some of what is expected from the community for the support of public health (Nies & McEwen, 2013) ^[24]. Also, every individual has a duty to the health of society as a whole. Islam advocates for daily activities that are good to others like ensuring cleanliness to prevent diseases and not inflicting dangers on other people in matters related to public health interventions. An individual's health obligation goes beyond his personal life since he can affect other people around him. It includes taking part in campaigns for the awareness of proper health and ensuring activities that will not affect public health like proper waste management and environmental conservation against pollution (Michaelson *et al.*, 2021; Al-Hadrawi *et al.*, 2024) ^[21]. See Figure 9.

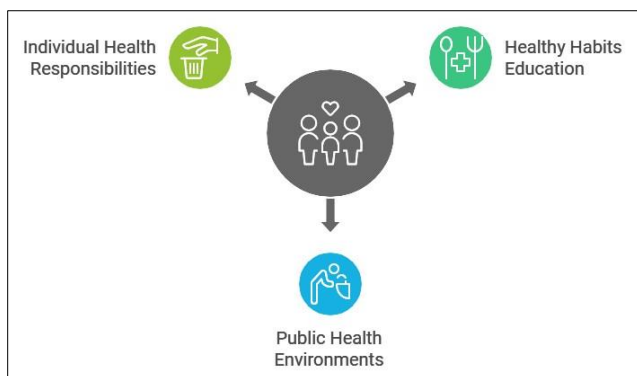


Fig 9: Promoting Public Health in Islam

In short, Islam is about the total organization of the problems of public health, in which the family and society and the individual add up to bring health to a vibrant and harmonious society. It is through education, support, and responsible behavior that families and communities largely boost overall health and quality of life.

Conclusion and Recommendations

For Muslims, maintaining health comes through the harmony of the body and spirit. This is seen as an umbrella that covers the general interconnectedness that man's physical, mental, and spiritual health ought to have under Islamic guidance while advocating for a holistic approach to some health practices. It is from a healthy body and soul that individuals can have the strength to live fulfilling lives and make a positive contribution to their communities.

To improve public health while observing Islamic teachings, we would suggest several steps as crucial

- **Family Health Education:** The family needs to be educated so that children can learn proper health practices, including nutrition, exercise, and mental health. Islamic values of cleanliness, moderation, and respect for the body should also be instilled within the children for lifelong health maintenance.
- **Community Initiatives for Healthful Living:**

Provision of appropriate infrastructure and resources for positive health practices among activities like the provision of parks, gymnasiums, and wellness centers. Develop public spaces and access to health care that maintain conducive conditions supporting psychological as well as physical health.

- **Encouraging Environmental Responsibility:** Another teaching of Islam is in the preservation of the environment. For this, individuals and communities must reduce waste, conserve water, and keep up clean green spaces.
- **Fostering Spiritual Well-being:** Regular daily prayers, mindfulness, and asking for something from a person's definite belief can develop mental strength and stable emotions with a spiritual approach towards personal welfare and social harmony.
- **Promoting Public Health Awareness:** The Community-based and preventive information provision and campaigns, if available, help to make the best possible choices by empowering the concerned people. The provision of available health education is one of the Islamic good deeds for the interest of a large population.

Hence, by the observance of these recommendations people and society would play their due parts in the promotion of public health as envisaged in Islamic teachings and values. Such balance in health would bring about the best quality of life as the body's wellness would be in harmony with spiritual satisfaction and this would accrue to society in general.

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