



Reflections

The Invisible Force of Faith**Dr. Sana Rafique***THQ, Bhagtanwala, Sargodha*

Faith is an inexpressible sensation. It is an unseen force, but very influential. It runs through your veins, ignites your soul and keeps you alive.

Many incidents affect your life in different dimensions, but there is this one incident in my medical life that is unforgettable. The memories are as fresh as it just happened yesterday. The invincible force of faith is beyond one's cognition and intellect. It makes you believe in life even at the verge of your death bed.

Saturday, March 12, 2022, I rushed to the COVID emergency after spending a peaceful night in the dengue HDU. Thankfully, no patient was admitted there. After entering the ER, I was informed by the nursing staff about an aged patient that was not admitted to the ward yet. On inquiring, I was told that he belonged to the medical unit on call at night. After scrutinizing his papers and the attended call by pulmonology which stated a less likely suspicion of COVID, getting infuriated was quite natural. I informed the administration about this apathy and went directly to the ward's registrar who upon catching me up was consistent on his having a strong suspicion of COVID and re-wrote the notes stating the same. So I had to return in disappointment.

As I entered the ER again, the influx of patients was increasing, so I just rushed to manage them as early as I could; checking their vitals, examining them, writing my notes, advising pertinent investigations and giving instructions to the staff accordingly. Then after scribbling calls to pulmonology, I had my breakfast.

After a while, an old lady came to me with some lab reports. They belonged to the same old man. Unfortunately, he had deranged liver and kidney function tests along with raised troponin levels. So, I ordered a new ECG and counselled the family about his condition, which was definitely not good news for them. I could feel an intense pain and tears floating on his wife's face. Maybe she was assuming me to be an insensitive and rather blunt person, but never could she see the pain inside me. Situations like these always make me restless. I went again to see that patient, but despite being in so much pain, he was calm and peaceful. A glimpse



of pain was visible on his face, though. It further increased my discomfort and a bit scared me as well. It was rather confusing. His O₂ saturation was fluctuating, so I increased his O₂ flow until saturation was stabilized. I scribbled his calls to the concerned departments as he needed a multidisciplinary approach. "Life is so cruel and uncertain sometimes." I thought. His wife told me many a tale of her family tree until his calls get attended. Unexpectedly, I found those stories quite interesting, probably due to her pakhtoon accent and simplicity. Patients' influx was increasing, so I again got busy.

Unfortunately, two of the patients expired and one of them was an I/V drug abuser. One of his attendants was a transgender and his misery and feeling of helplessness was heart wrenching. Too much concern and sympathy makes you quite sensitive at times. Fortunately or unfortunately, that was the case with me. I always ponder it. I composed myself and went back to my seat where

the old man's ECG and attended calls were waiting. As expected, he was going into multi organ failure. His family had gathered making a wall around him and consoling him one by one. He had a discomfort and pain on his face upon hearing them. Sadly, this nation can never understand the precautions while visiting a COVID patient, so we had to move them out.

I sat on my seat again when suddenly I witnessed something quite unusual and rare in such debilitated patients. It was Dhuhar time and that old man was offering prayer with gestures. I was startled at the spectacle. Despite his ailing condition, debilitation and a dependence on high flow oxygen with an NRM attached for even breathing properly, he was praying. He had been resilient and patient without shedding a single tear throughout the day, but he was crying during prostration and asking his Lord to alleviate his pain. I had goosebumps. I noticed his face keenly. The same white beard, peaceful and angelic face my late grandpa had. "Do all pious people have such resemblance?" I pondered. A chill of horror swept across my spine and I felt numb until I was patted on my back.

"Are you alright Dr. Sana?" The nursed uttered. "Yeah! I'm fine." I said after regaining my senses. I was just looking at that patient, I said in a low tone. "Oh yeah! Me too. He seems like quite a pious man. Doesn't he?" she said. "Of course! He does." I replied in a shattering but affirmative tone.

But it was not just piety; it was something far beyond that. It was an invisible divine force that was keeping

him hopeful even in that condition. It was "Faith." His faith in his Lord that He would not leave him stranded, shattered or weakened. It was this faith that kept him peaceful and calm even in adversity. Adding to his kindness, he gave some money to that transgender advising him to pray regularly. He also offered me some money as a token of love which I refused politely, mentioning my adherence to medical ethics. The prayers and a soft pat on my head he gave me before leaving were priceless. I cannot forget the look on his face when he was consistent on my being his doctor in the ward, too. I laughed at the moment considering myself not worthy of that. "Kindness never goes unrewarded." I reckoned.

That day I learnt that true essence of faith. It strengthens you with every trial. It is beyond one's fear and insecurities. It was faith in Lord that let Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S) leave his wife and infant stranded in a barren land, made Hazrat Hajrah (A.S) run in search of water without having the slightest sign if it, let Hazrat Musa (A.S) walk through a sea without the fear of getting drowned in it, Hazrat Maryam (A.S) pray without having food and being falsely accused and let our Holy Prophet peace and blessings be upon him endure every trial and tribulation with courage, resilience and dignity. Faith does keep you alive.

"Hope makes you walk through fire, faith makes you leap over it."