

## SPIRITUALITY AND WELL BEING

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### BLEND OF SCIENCE AND ART

*How do I a seeker in spirituality and you all medical people meet.* Both our professions share a peculiarity that sets us apart from all others. All other activities in the world are either a science or an art – either something to be studied intellectually and retained in memory or a skill to be practiced with subtle inherent talents. In medicine and spirituality, knowledge is essential, no doubt, but it also has to be practiced according to the demands of the situation.

In medicine as well as spirituality there is a blend of art and science. As medical people you are scientists, but as individuals you help to remove the pains and sorrows of others. You need to make contact with the suffering, which is an art. Also in such a way that in the midst of the sorrowful or suffering around me, I don't lose my joy or balance.

In spirituality as a seeker, I need to study the science of religion for years. This study is to be strengthened by the art of practice. I need to move in society serving all, and derive joy through my contact with people and beings around. If this art is not there, I would move in the world an erudite scholar, a great person of words, but may actually live a life of sensuality and passion without any joy within nor spreading peace around me.

### SPIRITUALITY AS A WAY OF LIFE

Spirituality is not portraying something as a god, residing beyond the clouds, or an experience after death, but a way of life here and now, in the present moment. When spirituality is adopted as a way of life, it brings about certain adjustments in our intellectual attitudes, emotional equilibrium and physical relationships with the world outside that is concomitant with healthy living.

*How should I as a doctor do my work?*

Gurujji, present head of Chinmaya mission worldwide has said 'Our place of practice (Hospital or clinic) is our temple. Patients are God. Treating them is our worship. Self Actualisation is our reward.'

If an individual's only goal is to get the maximum money with minimum effort, then his mind will also think along crooked lines – printing counterfeit money, corruption, pick pocketing. But, one who has a noble idea – 'I must do something great for my country,' or before I die I must give more to the world than the world has given to me – will have more creative thoughts and his actions will also reflect it. His endeavours will naturally be geared towards a more noble way of living. Whatever profession I may belong to, the beauty of one's activities will depend upon the quality of thoughts entertained which in turn are determined by the nature of the ideal in the mind.

If my goal is merely to satisfy my biological urges, then in what way am I different from the four-legged ones? Its head, heart, belly and all the rest are in one line. But as man head is on top, then the heart, then the belly, followed by the rest. Clearly man's glory is to live up to his intellectual convictions. Emotional and intellectual satisfaction takes precedence over the demands of the belly.

To live thus is being spiritual. Today everyone wants minimum work and maximum profit! Consider a family's condition if all its members want to do the minimum, but take the maximum! Spirituality pushes man to imitate nature. In nature emphasis is on giving than taking. Sun pours out energy. Never has it asked for dividend or share in our profits. The rivers, ocean, wind, air, sky, the trees, plants, animals everyone of them unintelligent though they may be, give in abundance. Nature's law seems to be: Give, Give, give. It is only the intelligent man who wants everybody else to give, except himself. Only a person who produces more and gives back to the world more than he takes wins our respect.

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See all your patients as God. We only treat. Nature or God cures.

Dr. Lakshmi from Hyderabad approached Pujya Gurudev and said ' Swamiji how can I practice spirituality amidst my busy schedule. She was a Government Doctor having a private practice too and also a family to take care with siblings. Gurudev said When a patient enters, say narayana. After you listen and you are to write the prescription say narayana. Give it to him saying narayana.

What You as doctors and me as seeker of God have in common is our dedication. If you want to have the privilege and joy of serving the world outside, you will have to sacrifice your own personal comforts and dedicate our efforts for the well being of others. Now medicine has become a profession and a lucrative one! Unfortunately, the main consideration now is how much money can be made out of it.

The first few stanzas of the Ayurvedic Sastras instruct the physician to accept whatever is given by the patient out of gratitude as prasada from the lord. He is advised to live with the bare minimum and experience the joy of serving others and reducing their sorrows. There is no place here for the joy of hoarding wealth! For that, one can go and conduct business in big city, which is the place to make money. The purpose of this sacred profession is to relieve the pain of others and gather the wealth of the inner joy of fulfillment.

***Attitude towards illness at empirical level:***

All diseases inflict pain, and therefore they are disliked by everybody. But they do come at any age and at any time. The body is called the hutment of diseases. How should they be regarded?

Though they are painful, one must understand that they are not enemies. In fact, they are our well-wishers. This is difficult to accept. Any disease does not come suddenly. Generally there are some symptoms prior to its manifestation. When there is some kind of impurity in the body, it always throws up some symptoms. But we get agitated by these. It is said that symptoms warn us that something serious is coming up.

Human beings are peculiar. We set up an alarm but when it rings, we get irritated and shut it off. The body too, rings an alarm but we do not pay attention to it. Instead we get angry or worried. What should we do when symptoms are detected? From the worldly standpoint discarding any kind of worry, fear or dislike, we should become alert and go to a doctor and ask about the problem and its remedy. And after knowing the remedy, we must follow the prescription with extreme patience. A patient must have great patience.

In Mahabharata yaksha asks yudhisthira what is the greatest gain? Yudhishtira answers enjoying good health is the greatest gain. In English also there is a saying, 'health is wealth'. To gain wealth people lose their health and then to regain health lose a lot of wealth! So good health is important. If you are not well you will not enjoy even a comedy show.

**Attitude towards medicine**

People love to eat good food and indulgence in eating causes diseases. What is there to be surprised then, when they hate the medicine which is beneficial to them and cures them. In ayurveda, it is said that patients should look upon medicine as the mother. Just as the mother is a well wisher, so is the medicine. It will cure you.

***From Dharmic view point:***

Dharma sastra gives another viewpoint. It says, the sins committed in earlier lives manifest in the form of diseases. As I go through the disease my sins are being washed off. I should be happy that they are gone. This is a positive approach with regard to disease. Follow the prescription faithfully and do not complain. Go through it. The disease is a very auspicious thing. It is releasing me from my sins. It is not a cause of sorrow. This entire vision should be from our own standpoint – how to look at our own disease, without worries and anxieties. As far as others are concerned, we must make all efforts to relieve their pain.

***from the spiritual standpoint:***

Surrender to Lord: When you are in the hospital, you must surrender to the doctor who knows best what is needed for your treatment. The all benevolent Lord has placed us here, in this world for curing us. Whatever we may get in our small intelligence we may not know the reason for the pain or tear or joy that we experience. He knows the reason. The manufacturer of Ford cars will know how to get the car out of its problems when it coughs and stops. Lord knows the

reason for our existence and the purpose behind our coughs and he knows how to get us out too. 'I leave all care with Him above whose love for me is endless and true'

**Attitude of acceptance:** Quote "What I get is His gift to Me. What I do with what I get is my gift to Him." Lets do our best with whatever equipments we have however they may be. The great Lord is our creator, a master artist. Do the colour or brush or the paintings ever quarrel with the painter? An attitude of acceptance saying – "Whatever you do, O Lord, who am I to quarrel with Thee? Does a picture ever quarrel with the painter?" goes a long way in bringing well being within.

***Ask how and not Why?***

Arthur Ashe, the legendary Wimbledon player was dying of Cancer. From world over, he received letters from his fans, one of which conveyed : "Why does GOD have to select you for such a bad disease"? To this Arthur Ashe replied: "The world over -- 5 crore children start playing tennis, 50 lakh learn to play tennis, 5 lakh learn professional tennis, 50,000 come to the circuit,

5000 reach the grand slam, 50 reach Wimbledon, 4 to semi final, 2 to the finals, When I was holding a cup I never asked GOD "Why me?". And today in pain I should not be asking GOD "Why me?".

Instead of asking why me? Lets ask how me and act towards recovery.

Let us fill our hearts with gratitude for the gifts we have received from the Lord. See what we have, instead of seeing what we don't have. For a person who gifts me a wrist watch, I offer so many thanks. Lets take time to tell our gratitude to the one who gave us the wrist to wear the watch.

*give up identification and attachment to the body, rise above the worries and absorb the mind in the Lord who is one's own Self, because the ultimate physician is Lord.*

Someone asked a mahatma who was suffering from a painful disease, 'what did you do when the pain was unbearable?' The mahatma replied that at such times he went into Samadhi. He meditated. Ramakrishna paramahansa had throat cancer. He could barely talk to the visitors. Swami Vivekananda persuaded him to pray to mother to give him some relief so that he could eat and drink something. On his insistence Ramakrishna prayed once. And mother's reply was, 'are you not eating through other peoples' mouths?' this is rising above the affliction. Diseases are the best way for practice of spirituality - to check how much attachment they have for the body.

Even spiritual people come to doctors to solve their problems. Such is the noble work of doctors.