

Spiritualism and medicine

"Is a human being Spiritual or Religious by nature?" Most of the people remain in dilemma and are tunable to differentiate between "Spiritualism" and "Religiousness." This confusion is very deeply rooted in our society. Being religious not necessary means spiritual. However, I feel all human beings on this planet are spiritual by nature, but they may or may not be necessarily religious. Over the decades, modernization and globalization of the society have created more materialistic attitude, thereby encroaching upon our spiritual activity. To me, modernization, materialistic attitude and increased wealth have all created a diverse form of society, with both shrinking religious and spiritual values. In this write-up, I am trying to share some of my thinking pertaining to this topic. This is an account of my personal experience earned over the decades, and I have been delivering a lecture over several platforms on this topic, as I experience negativity and helplessness in the society on a day to day basis.

The aims and objectives of the Ethics regulation guidelines laid down by Medical Council of India (MCI) are to produce human doctors. However, as per the WHO definition of "good health," it means "complete physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing and not merely absence of disease or disability." Therefore, if the above definition is taken in the true spirit, spiritual wellbeing is an important component. According to Census statement for the years 2001 and 2011, there is a deficit of approximately 1 million medical doctors and 6 million nurses in India. Thus, we need more number of quality doctors and nurses to serve our citizens in India. Hence, it has tremendous implications for both health care personnel and health administrators. Then, question arises "Are the doctors spiritual by nature? or "How to motivate our doctors spiritually?" Can non-spiritual doctors do ethical practices or whether non spiritual doctors are healthy, as per the WHO norms. Hence, both for good health and good doctors, Spiritualism is an important aspect, which needs to be addressed.

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WHAT IS SPIRITUALISM?

Spiritualism is that part of life that connects the human being to divinity. It gives the knowledge that soul and god are interconnected, like a power station and electric bulb. Without the power, there is no function of an electric bulb. Until there is supply of power, the bulb will glow, and so also the life of a human being. Till there is the soul inside of our bodies, we are beautiful and pure and at the time or after departure of the soul body has very little functioning.

All the above mentioned assumptions lead to general beliefs in the people, irrespective of religion, cast or country, that there are supernatural powers and that there is someone, above all, of us, who is "Super Natural," as very well mentioned in the Sanskrit Sloka "Na Cha Daibat Parambalam;" which means there is no one more powerful than the nature.

This fact is being realized time and again everywhere in this world, at time of the flood, cyclone, Tsunami or any other natural calamity. The burning examples being (a) Himalayan Tsunami on June 16-17, 2013. (b) Hurricane Annae at New Orleans, USA or (c) Tsunami in Fukusimma, Japan in 2012. At this point, I am reminded of an incidence, when 7 days after Tsunami in 2004, in Archi Island, Indonesia, a 6-month-old baby was rescued from the Indian Ocean, floating on a wooden Board. Is it not a miracle? That has been puzzling me all these years?

Obviously, all above points need to be considered in a proper perspective; "God," Almighty, Super natural, Allah etc., Once Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan had written about "Science and Religion" and immediately pondered that "Is there is any nonreligious person in this world"! Moreover, it looks that good health and Spiritualism are inseparable, because I do believe that all the human beings, irrespective of faith, cast or religion believe in God. Then, if that is the case, how can a doctor be nonspiritual!

In the recent years, people have started thinking and respect the President, Prime Minister, Chief Minister, Kings, Sultans and Emperors as God. Thus, every one's belief on God is like blind person looking at an elephant. At any moment in this world, millions of people pray for "God" for various needs. This strengthens the concept of omnipresence of God. Even to quote Bhagwad Gita, Lord Krishna has said 'God is present in all living

and – nonliving objects.” Undoubtedly, Lord appeared from a pillar for the help of his devotee, Prahallad. Is this not true?

If we, somehow, for a fraction of a second believe in the presence of God, then who has seen him? Who has experienced him? This is a difficult answer to get. Over the centuries we know great people like Jesus, Budha, Chaitanya, Meera, Ramkrishna Paramhans and many others who have seen, spoken and experienced “God.” Ask the people who survived Himalayan Tsunami and those who saw thousands perish in front of their eyes. In fact in every sphere of life, we experience God and wonders he performs every day.

HOW SPIRITUALISM IS IMPORTANT FOR DEVELOPMENT?

If Spiritualism is the integral part of good health, it is also an integral part of overall development of a person. It helps to imbibe good character and shapes one's personality. If you all accept the above concept, then how a good doctor can be nonspiritual? A good doctor has first of all to be a good human being. To be a good human being, person has to be spiritual. It is told that the food helps in the development of body and prayer is for the development of the “Soul.” Thus, the prayer is the food for the Soul. This has been proven by large number of saints and Godly persons like Adi Shankaracharya, Mother Teresa, Jesus, Chaitanya, Kabir, Meera, Tulsidas, Ramkrishna Paramhans and many others.

NEED FOR ETHICAL AND SPIRITUAL DOCTORS TODAY

Over the centuries and with modernization, the human values have gone down significantly. In India, it is a very recent phenomenon. The human values and sanctity was so pristine, if I look 50 years down the memory lane into my childhood, and perhaps now it is unimaginable what has gone wrong in the last half a century. The people were so happy without anything materialistic in those times. However, we might owe so many things today but the people in older times were happier, contented and moralistic. Unfortunately, things are going bad to worse day by day. The perception of a doctor by the society has changed drastically today. Believe or not, the society perceived the doctor like second God, a person who can do magic for a patient, who is a healer rather than a killer. Can the Doctor community today prove it right? I have my doubts, people spent lakhs to Crores to

see their son/daughter become a doctor and Specialist. Today world value money more than character and good values. In such a commercialized Society, can doctors remain noncommercialized? Is it possible? I do not need an answer, it is food for your thought.

The doctors are no more believed to be a second God by many people in the society, who think they can buy health by money. Can anyone buy good health with money? It is a misconception. Maybe money is necessary for good health. If that would have been correct, then all rich persons would have been healthy, without any disease. Money neither can give you good health nor can get you happiness. Hence the concept is ‘Health is Wealth.’

To have good health and happiness, we have to practice “Yoga,” which gives us stable and balanced mind. We have to maintain a good lifestyle. Today large number of noncommunicating diseases are due to rapid changes in our lifestyle. The doctors need to stay healthy, Spiritual, live a good lifestyle and to be a role model for others. Unfortunately, this is contrary to our graduate and postgraduate doctors for whom the degree is like a passport for making more and more money. As a Doctor community, we have to practice ethical medicine. Many doctors may not be knowing Ethics regulations (MCI) 2003 and 2007, abiding to which is necessary for patient care, Medical education, Medical publication and for bio-medical research. We all have to practice good clinical practice. For the doctors, patients are ‘God.’ Can this happen? We have been given a beautiful opportunity by God to serve the suffering humanity as doctors. We should not misuse this wonderful opportunity. Can we believe patients are God???

Can Doctors be Karma Yogi? Can doctors feel we are the servants of suffering humanity? If this can happen, doctors can regain the status of second God. For me, medicine is a religion, where doctors are the members. The hospitals are the temples for the doctors and patients are the God therein. I really do not know that when will medical professionals and doctor community realize this? However, I am optimistic that things will happen, in years to come, for the good!

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