

Spiritual Healing

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As a young doctor, way back in nineteen seventies, I came across a person who had a firm belief that bodily illnesses could be cured by repeated recitation of God's name and hymns from the holy scriptures. I was skeptical, almost critical of what I told him was nothing but blind faith and argued with him giving examples that malaria could be cured only by giving anti-malarial drugs and similarly tuberculosis only by anti-tubercular drugs.

God's Grace: After more than a quarter century of experience of dealing with patients, I have begun to realize that I was wrong. My belief that patients got well by the grace of science and not by the grace of God was because of my formal medical education for which the curriculum has been borrowed from the West and it has no place for things like faith, destiny, providence, spiritualism and the power of the hidden hand of the Creator. I have found that each patient is unique.

Patients with seemingly similar illnesses respond differently to same treatment. Some will require very little medication while others do not respond even to full doses and full courses of drugs. There is yet another category of patients who are not interested in a prescription of medicines. They just want to talk and this talk itself has a therapeutic effect on them.

Obviously, in healing of the body, there are multiple factors and some unknown forces playing a definite role. Observations have shown that different patients suffering from same illness will have different levels of basic physical health, different states of mind and emotions, different states of body defence mechanisms and immune system and, importantly different levels of what I call "spiritual health".

Prayer: In the recent years the scientific world has at last started to explore this aspect. In studies conducted in the USA, it has been found that patients who pray for themselves or are prayed for by relations or friends have quicker recovery as compared to those who do not take the help of prayer.

Similarly people visiting a place of worship regularly have been found to have less incidence of illnesses. A reputed medical journal from USA, '*Archives of Internal Medicine*' declared in its Oct, 1999 issue that 'A prayer has a potential role as an adjunct to standard medical care'.

Therapy starts with mind: Today we know that eighty percent of present day medical illnesses start, directly or indirectly, from the mind. Find the mind gets ill before a physical illness becomes manifest in the body. It follows that for the permanent cure of any illness, the mind should become peaceful and calm and free from the 'mental turmoil' of worldly worries and desires. It is in such a state of mind that the body starts healing itself automatically.

The way to achieve such a state is by accepting the divine justice (on the basis of action and result), by understanding that this world is a temporary abode and by developing love for That True friend – God to an extent that we remember Him constantly in our mind while carrying out all our worldly duties efficiently.

Paradox: Here the scientific mind faces a paradox. Science wants proof of a thing before believing it, whereas a seeker of God will develop faith and belief first, and the proof of His existence will be experienced later.

For a disciple on spiritual path, the cure of bodily illness may become a secondary matter and he sets out to achieve higher goals, namely, liberation from the cycle of births and deaths, realization of the Self (soul) and the ultimate union with the bigger Self (God), the very aim of human life.

