

5. Doctors, patients and society

Charity is the ornament for the hand.

Truth is the adornment for the tongue.

The scriptures are the ornaments for the ears.

Of what avail are other ornaments?

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Practioners of Modern Medicine! It is *dhaanam* (charity) that lends adornment to the hand. Only Truth lends beauty to speech. The scriptures serve to adorn the ears. Man needs no more beautiful ornaments than these. The glory of Divinity consists in sanctifying human existence by these ornaments.

The human body is a thing of marvellous beauty. Men cannot easily comprehend the secret of God's creation. No one can explain how the eyes have acquired the power of seeing this phenomenal world.

The beauty of all the organs in the human body is a secret of creation. Doctors try to find out how each sense organ and how each limb functions. No one tries to find out why they are functioning in this manner. This secret can be grasped only through the *Aathmik* or Divine Principle.

Human life is based on six constituents in the *Panchabhoothas* (five basic elements) and the *Aathma*. To recognise this fact, three paths have to be pursued. One is to recognise within one's self the presence of Nature and the Divine. A second path is to recognise in God the cosmic creation and one's self. The third path is to see in Nature the presence of God and one's self. It is only when knowledge is acquired by these three paths that *Aathma Jnaana* (Knowledge of the Self) arises. This three-fold path is termed *Prajna* (Integrated Awareness). Every man should try to understand this three-fold path. This can be done at all times in all places. It has universal application. It has permanent validity everywhere. But, man gets involved in what is impermanent and ever-changing.

Treat the patient; not the disease

There are in the world today highly intelligent and experienced doctors of great renown. They are, however, concerned only with the cure of diseases and not the redemption of the patient. It is more important to cure the mental condition of the patient than to relieve his physical illness. Doctors treat the disease and not the patient.

During the past two days, the doctors have been discussing how to cure diseases. They have presented statistics as to the number of cases handled, the number of cures effected and the incidence of mortality. The doctors have had some doubts about how all diseases are cured in our Sathya Sai Hospital. How does this happen? There is a good answer for this doubt. In regard to any action, if it is done with a pure heart and good intentions, it is bound to be successful. Man today regards self-interest as a way of life. This has become the philosophy of the modern world. But, we should consider *thyaaga* (sacrifice) alone as the true philosophy for the world. When you approach the patient in a spirit of sacrifice, the patient's feelings get purified.

Vibrations of light around the body

Our body is surrounded by Divine vibrations. If you look at the thumb, there are vibrations of light around it. Few attempt to recognise this phenomenon. The body is surrounded by vibrations of light. When these vibrations of light from one person meet another's, several good things happen.

There are two important organs for man. One is the heart and the other is the hand. The head is preoccupied with enquiring into mundane phenomena. It is concerned with the external. Its focus is on objects outside. The heart looks at what is within. The concern with the external has been termed *Pravritthi Maarga* (the path of externals)... All man's actions today, including the knowledge he acquires and the wealth he gets, are all related to *the Pravritthi Maarga*. The six vices of *Kaama* (lust), *Krodha* (anger), *Moha* (infatuation), *Lobha* (greed), *Madha* (pride) and *Maathsarya* (jealousy) are related to the *Pravritthi Maarga*. These undergo constant changes. Because the body is associated with these qualities, it is also subject to change.

But the heart remains unchanging. It is associated with the *Nivritthi Maarga* (the Inward path). What are the qualities associated with the heart? Truth, compassion, love, forbearance, sympathy and sacrifice: These human qualities emanate from the heart. So, in human life, the head and the heart play crucial roles. These two are kept in balance by the hand. Thus, the heart, the head and the hand are the three H's which are important in studying the human predicament.

Close nexus between the mind and *praana*

What are the causes of diseases of the heart? All diseases are a reflection of *Pravritthi*, the disposition of the mind: Hence, in worldly matters, man should follow the right path. In this context, two elements among the five basic elements are important. "*Bhikshaannam Dheharakshartham, Vasthram Seetha nivararanam*" (Food is essential for protecting the body; raiment is necessary for protection against cold). Associated with food is water. These two occupy pride of place in human life.

Life is the subtle form of the water consumed by man. The mind is the subtle form of the food taken by man. Hence a close nexus should be established between the mind and *Praana* (life force). As is the food, so is the head. Man's thoughts, desires and aspirations are related to the kind of food he consumes. For instance, you may discern from practical experience how food affects the mind. The cyclic process which starts with the formation of clouds and ends in the harvest of grain, determines the kind of food one can have.

Heat (or fire) is the basis of this process. This fire is present within man as *Jatharaagni*, the digestive fire, which accounts for the conversion of the food consumed by man into various forms of energy. This fire has to be in proper balance. When the balance is upset, you have illness. The state of man's body depends on the maintenance of this balance. Man's entire life depends on preserving this balance. When is the balance upset? When there is no mental steadiness. Men today develop all kinds of intellectual abilities, but they have not learnt how to keep the mind steady. When serenity of mind is achieved, there will be no disease. Illness will not approach you at all.

Importance of food in maintaining health

There should be some regulations with regard to food. Many doctors emphasize the value of proteins and recommend meat, eggs, etc. But proteins got in this form serve only to build the

body, but do considerable harm to the mind. Doctors are primarily concerned with the gross physical body. They pay little attention to the subtle form of the mental makeup. Most of the diseases that are prevalent in the world today are related to the mind. Mental illness seem to outnumber physical ailments. The *Vedhaantha* has declared that the mind is the cause of man's bondage or liberation. This means that the mind has to be used properly and turned godwards. Equally the mind is responsible for health or sickness.

In this context, food is all important. Proteins are present in milk, curds and vegetables as much as in meat. If in the matter of diet, the doctors give the right prescription, diseases can be averted.

Prevention is better than cure

In my view, instead of treating people after the onset of illness, it is better to ensure that they do not fall ill at all. Both doctors and the authorities should educate enceinte women about pre-natal care of children in the womb. It is distressing to find that new-born babes suffer from congenital heart diseases. Dr. Iyer showed the picture of a smiling child that had grown up after a heart operation shortly after birth. While one rejoices at such a sight, it is frightening to think of the operation that had to be done on a ten day old infant. In the case of congenital heart diseases, neither the parents nor the child can be happy. Nor can society be happy with such a situation. Something must be done to prevent heart troubles developing during pregnancy. There are medicines for preventing congenital heart ailments. For instance, if the mother is given various vitamins, the child's heart can be strengthened. The mother should be taught all about pre-natal care and given the necessary medicines. Pregnant women should be periodically checked in the hospital. It is better to take all preventive measures before the birth of a child than to carry the burden of bringing up a weak and crippled child all his life.

Doctors alone cannot impart this message to all women. They can only advise those who come to them. But doctors can bring home to the authorities their responsibility in the area of preventive measures. What is the use of spending crores on curative measures without promoting health? It is a waste of money. There are many hazards in the use of antibiotics in the treatment of certain diseases like tuberculosis and the use of pesticides in agriculture.

Doctors should be grateful to the society

Doctors should realise what they owe to society, which has preserved and imparted to them their knowledge of the medical sciences. Medical knowledge has been enriched by the contributions of dedicated investigators over centuries. Doctors should be grateful to society for all the knowledge and skills they have acquired from the dedicated labours of others. They should realize their deep indebtedness to society for all they have received from it. Only then, they will use their knowledge and skills in the right way.

People today think in terms of only their personal interests. They should develop a social consciousness, realising what all they' owe to society. Men today have become so utterly selfish that they behave in inhuman ways. They do not make proper use of their talents and resources in the service of their fellowmen.

Doctors are embodiments of the Divine. As such, it is their duty to see that people do not shed tears of grief. They may doubt how far this is possible. Do as much as lies within your power. What happens thereafter need not bother you. Treat Duty as God and Work as Worship. If you carry on your work in this spirit, the world will be a happier place for all.

I have to give a word of advice to the doctors present here. There is a tendency to specialize in the treatment of heart diseases which has gone to absurd lengths. I would advise the doctors to treat the heart as a whole and not fragment every part of it for specialised treatment. Specialisation has grown to alarming proportions in the world today. Doctors should be "generalists," who know how to treat different ailments of a patient.

The heart teaches an important lesson to man. It appears to beat tirelessly without stopping. But, in fact, it is able to rest in brief intervals between one beat and another. The heart teaches you how to take rest even while at work. I often tell the students that "change of work is rest." This is-the way the heart functions when it pumps the blood from one chamber to the other.

Lessons from the human cell

Few can realise the limitless potentialities of each cell in the human body. It is one of the great secrets of creation. The cells teach man the lesson of *thyaaga* (sacrifice). For the progress of human life, sacrifice is essential. The scripture, declares that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice. Immortality means the removal of immorality. The various' cells in the body account for the performance of various functions by the senses and other limbs of the body. The power of the cells comes from the Divine. No one can explain it. Modern scientists term it as a "law of Nature." But wherefrom has this "law" emerged? There should be some one who lays down the law? For every product, like this silver tumbler, there is a maker. Silver is God's creation. The tumbler has been made by a goldsmith. It has not come as a ready-made tumbler. You have on the earth water and clay. They are God's creation. By mixing them both, the potter makes pots out of them. The creator for the pot is the potter. God is the Creator for the five elements--space, air, fire, water and earth. No one else can create these elements. But man makes use of these natural elements for making objects for his enjoyment. One man produces an aeroplane for flying. Another makes a parachute for safety if something happens to the plane. Scientists should be concerned with producing things that ensure safety.

How the Divine works

In this connection, I should like to tell you something whether you believe it or not. I do not have any worry. When I embarked on the construction of such a big hospital (the Super Speciality Hospital), Joga Rao used to say: "We are drawing up such gigantic plans. We don't have enough money. How are we going to construct this hospital?" He was highly apprehensive. I told him: "What we are undertaking is good work for the welfare of others. There is no selfishness in Me. We are doing everything for the well-being of the world. Do not give room for these depressing thoughts. It is bound to come up. Have this confidence."

When does such confidence arise? When you know you are engaged in a good cause. There is a difference between an optimist and a pessimist when they view a glass half-full of water. The optimist is glad that the tumbler is half-full, while the pessimist is sorry that the tumbler is half-empty. You should not give way to pessimism. You must feel content with whatever you have. With contentment, anything can be achieved.

Medical education should lay stress on quality

The plight of doctors (in India) deserves sympathy. Many of them have to spend large sums to get seats in medical colleges and to complete their education. The doctor is worried how to recover the money that has been spent on his education. Something must be done to solve this problem. For instance, no one should be admitted in a medical college merely because he is able

to pay a large capitation fee (of lakhs). Only those who have the talents and aptitude for medical studies should be admitted. Such students will immensely benefit from medical education and will be of use to society. Today you must have either plenty of money or influential backing to get into a medical college. Students who get admitted this way take even twelve years to complete the five year medical course. Of what use are such men? The stress should be on quality and not quantity in the sphere of medical studies.

In earlier years, medical students used to work hard spending even 18 hours a day. Without such hard work, no one would get his degree. Alas! today things are otherwise. Students pass without much study. Such ill-educated doctors are a calamity to the nation. Not all doctors are of this kind. There are quite a few competent doctors.

It is the duty of the medical profession to rectify this situation. They should contact the authorities to bring about reforms. Only then will the nation progress.

We do not need many hospitals. Patients can be treated easily. In my view, there is no need for you to worry about money and resources. Treat your patients with love, Duty is God. This love should be mutual give and take. You may charge fees for your services, but do it with love. This is the right course for you. When you render service in this spirit, you will be successful in all cases. When you treat the patient with love, you will win the patient's love. Hence, your motto should be: "Start the day with love, fill the day with love and end the day with love." This is the way to God.

Our American doctor, who addressed the valedictory session, said that doctors should speak sweetly to patients. Whatever you do should be filled with love. A patient feels reassured when he sees the smiling face of a doctor.

Tribute to participants of Medical Conference

Embodiments of Divine Love! You have come from long distances, undergoing many strains. Conferences and symposia of all kinds are held all over the world all the time. But none of the decisions arrived at these gathering are implemented. Our Symposium is different. You have all come in a spirit of dedication. The decisions taken here should be implemented. You came here to learn from others as well as to share your experiences with others. You should return all the better for your visit. You should feel encouraged by your experiences here. Elated by this experience, you should be able to achieve many things. Return to your countries with joy in your hearts. You have had edifying experiences. It is fortunate that highly experienced doctors have been able to participate in this Symposium. They have also visited our Hospital and given many useful suggestions for enlarging its usefulness in the years ahead. We shall try to give effect to these suggestions. We are making plans for developing the Urology and Neurology wings. Please convey your experience and suggestions from time to time and encourage our doctors to do better. We wish that you should also make occasional visits to our Institute and Hospital. You are always welcome. Do not have any hesitation. This is your Hospital! Not mine. You are my property. Do not wait for invitations from here. There can be no objection to your coming to your own home.

Highly experienced professional men have come here. No conference could have taken place in such a peaceful atmosphere as here with such pure hearted participants. In most conferences there are heated debates. Here everything was peaceful and calm. It was a sacred exercise. As Dr. Somaraju said, we have here a temple, where proper prayers should be offered. What should be

this prayer? It is! All patients should get well. "*Lokaas samasthaas Sukhino Bhavanthu!*" (Let all people be happy).

I conclude my discourse with the benediction that in the years to come all people should lead healthy and ideal lives.

Address to the Valedictory session of the Cardiac Speciality Symposium on 7-2-1993.