

Spiritual Health: Practical Tips from a Yogi

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Abstract

Spiritual health is interlinked with physical mental and social health. World Health organization also viewed it as the missing component of definition of health. In this article we have explained the meaning of spirituality, its relation with health and spiritual healing. In last section of the paper we have discussed the practical method of a Siddha Yogi to achieve spiritual health through meditation. Spiritual center is placed in temporal lobe. It is believed that spiritual person falls ill less frequently, copes better with illness and recovers faster. The power of spiritual healing is programmed in all living creatures. If we address spiritual health and healing we can achieve the other three dimension of health.

Physical, mental, and spiritual healths are deeply interlinked in all respects and have a profound effect on one another. When we are spiritually connected and balanced, we feel better physically and emotionally and do well in social endeavors. Thus if we address our spiritual health, the other three dimensions (physical, mental and social) of health can be taken care of by itself and help us to reach the goal of *Holistic Health and Wellness for All*.

Spiritual Health

As defined by World Health Organization (WHO), "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". Whereas the spiritual health is all concerned with the beliefs of faith and inner consciousness of mind, we can also say if the mind is free from any illness it gives a better perfect body without any illness, deformity and infirmity. In the late 70's of last century, the WHO entertained a discussion to include the 'spiritual' dimension in the definition of health and experts started to view spiritual health as the missing component of the definition of health.¹

Chapman has made initial attempt to define spiritual health. The suggested preliminary definition is "Optimal spiritual health may be considered as the ability to develop our spiritual nature to its fullest potential. This would include our ability to discover and articulate our own basic purpose of life, learn how to experience love, joy, peace and fulfilment and how to help ourselves and others to achieve their full potential."¹ Developing good spiritual health releases inner suffering and adds deeper meaning and value to our lives. It also increases our compassion towards others, builds a healthy community, and improves our ability to live sustainably. Today we suffer more from artificial anxieties and worries as we focus on things outside ourselves. Many paths can lead to the achievement of spirituality: music, art, connection with nature, religion, helping a needy person, or any other values and principles.

We must understand that interactions between spirituality, spiritual health, and the other dimensions of health (physical, mental and social) do exist. Harnessing forces for constructive human behavioral change is, and always has been, one of the stumbling blocks and challenges of health professionals. Committing to the beliefs in supernatural and metaphysical is probably the most powerful motivator of human behavioral change. By ignoring the spiritual dimension of health,

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we may be depriving ourselves of the leverage; we need to help to empower individuals and populations to achieve improved physical, mental and social health.²

Meaning of Spirituality

The word *spiritual* is derived from conscious energy (*Atma*). Conscious energy is the part of supreme conscious energy (*Parmatma*) named as God and so many other names by various sects of the society. He has created the whole world including living creatures and nature. The human being comes under the category of *Pashu* (animal). All living creatures have four common fundamental needs (obligations) that are: (a) Substance (food and drives regarded as a source of strength and all nourishment); (b) Sleep (suspension of consciousness important for consolidation of memory health and wellbeing); (c) Fear (It is one of the basic human emotions. It is programmed in neurons system and works as an instinct); and (d) Coition (It is needed for the existence of species).

He has created/fabricated the creations of whole world of the universe out of five essential elements – *Akash* (space), *Vayu* (air), *Agni* (fire), *Jal* (water) and *Prithvi* (earth) – as *Pindaj* (viviparous), *Jarayuj* (born with umbilical cord), *Andaj* (oviparous), *Swedaj* (volatile) and *Udbhij* (botanic). When conscious energy enters the physical body, it becomes “live”. However, when the same conscious energy enters in the astral body, it becomes “spirit”.

According to Swami Vivekananda “religion is not in doctrines, in dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation; it is being and becoming” and spirituality is the essence of it. Spiritual Intelligence is ‘the ultimate intelligence’. Though the ancient yogic texts mentioned the heart as the space of *Atma*, research studies have indicated that there is a ‘God Spot’ in the human brain. It is a natural spiritual center placed in neural connections in the temporal lobes. Special scans have revealed that these neural areas are lightened whenever the experimental group is exposed to interaction on spiritual issues. This indicates that there is an inbuilt craving for larger meaning. Also, it was shown that a specific neural process exists in the brain which unifies and attaches meaning to our experiences. These ‘unifying neural oscillations’ indicate a third type of thinking Unitive Thinking, dealing with the questions of meaning.³ Initially, only two types of “brain neural organizations were recognized: One for intelligence (IQ) and the other for emotions (EQ). This third type of neural process can be attributed to spirituality. *Spiritual intelligence (SQ)* could be said to operate at three levels for making it simpler to understand: *cognitive*, *affective* and *behavioral*. In 2011, Dhar and colleagues attempted to define the three domains of spiritual health: self-evolution, self-actualization and transcendence, and developed a self-administered spiritual health scale for measuring this fourth dimension of health⁴.

Spirituality and Health

Spiritual health is an essential component of our well-being and an integral aspect of the holistic health philosophy. When we feel spiritually connected and fulfilled, everything in our lives becomes more comfortable including dealing with physical and emotional pain. We feel lighter and happier. Spirituality relates to the union of one’s inner self to the universe. Health comes from heal. “Heal” originated from the old English word “Hælen”, which means to restore to the whole. Thus spirituality leads to health where we identify ourselves with the whole and helps us to grow out of our identifications of narrow ego self.

A cross-sectional study on ‘Spirituality and health: A knowledge, attitude and practice study among doctors of North India’, revealed that most of the doctors believed in the curative role of spirituality. They were curious on scientific enquiry in this area. Majority of doctors in study opined that a spiritual person falls ill less frequently, copes better with illness and recovers faster. They also believed that spirituality helps a person to face stress and death better.⁵ Imagery, meditation, and group support activities may address various components of spiritual health such as meaning and purpose in life; self-awareness; and connectedness with self-others, and a larger reality.⁶ Time has come when the health professionals globally need to think out of the box and delve into the matter. They must provide focus in the direction of introducing spiritual health for overall care. When an individual is in agony with stress, lifestyle syndromes, disorders and diseases, there is a great need to integrate wholesome preventive, diagnostic and rehabilitative health interventions inclusive of spiritual health.⁷

Spiritual Healing

The allopathic system of medicine uses remedies like medicines or surgeries to combat diseases by producing desired effects on the condition being treated. Homeopathy is based on the concept that disease can be treated with minute doses of drugs thought capable of developing the same symptoms in healthy people as the disease itself. And Ayurvedic medicine utilizes diet, detoxification and purification techniques, herbal and mineral remedies, yoga, and breathing exercises. Spiritual healing is the healing of the unseen energy in our energy field. Our thoughts and feelings get reflected in our bodies immediately or sometimes later. We all must have observed that when we are stressed or facing sadness our chances of getting ill increase.

Human beings have an extra quality of intelligence, thus they treat themselves as most dominant species in the world. On the basis of one extra quality, they exploited the other living beings and nature in their own interest for survival. This has created lots of problems of health; that is why the

spiritual health and wellness is essential need of the day. It has become the requirement for dealing with day-to-day problems. For living a healthy and fruitful life, we need good health, peaceful mind and sufficient energy which can be achieved with the help of spiritual energy available within us. We have to activate this spiritual energy within ourselves and utilize it with some methods. With experience, we can opine that eternal love and meditation are practical methods to achieve it. The eternal love is in the *Ahinsha* (a component of first limb) and meditation (element of the seventh limb) of Patanjali's *Astanga Yoga* [Eight limbs of Astanga yoga are Yama (ethical disciplines), Niyama (rules of conduct), Asana (postures), Pranayama (restraint or expansion of the breath), Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation) and Samadhi (bliss)]. Love is of two types one is physical and other is astral (subtle). The astral love is called-eternal love, which can be achieved through meditation. Eternal love can change all discriminations among all humans of the universe. Just try to love yourself, your own ones and then love everyone. This can create peace and harmony. Eternal love is astral, everlasting and selfless. It does not require a physical relationship of selfishness which is the characteristic of physical love between two persons. Eternal love happens without any requirement, it has no boundaries of traditions, customs, creed, gender and religion. It is universal and for all. Physical love has mottos, requirements and limitations. It is very difficult to follow it throughout one's life; the moment purpose is solved the love is lost. But it is not so in eternal love, because it has no physical intention only continual feeling. First try yourself. Based on our experiences and research, we have attempted to make it simple to achieve. The method is being used by more than 3000 people from different parts of the world, mostly from Europe, Russia, United States, Ukraine and India. During this research, everybody experienced relaxation in stress and strain in mind and body. They could feel the flow of spiritual energy within self. After the practice of this meditation they felt peace, energetic and cheerful.

We are putting these steps of meditation for the benefit of all, if anyone wants to practice and achieve the spiritual energy. It is a method of self-healing. We know that many people practice meditation in their way as taught to them. However, sometimes they get more involved in the technique of practice rather than the experience or feeling of blissful flow of energy. Any person who is interested in achieving the spiritual power of healing someone or self, has to adopt the yogic practices to gain the power from all five elements: *Akash* (ether), *Vayu* (air), *Agni* (fire), *Jal* (water) and *Prithvi* (earth) from within self and the outside world through concentration on a particular element at a time. After achieving such powers, one becomes capable of making someone free from disease. Diseases are generated within the body and mind due to imbalance and disturbance of these five elements of the universe,

so these can be used to heal as well. To achieve powers from outer world elements, one has to do a well-planned *sadhana* to attain control on these elements. However, to make the power to heal ourselves one has to practice to gain strength from within by concentrating on inner parts through various *chakras* (Plexuses) from *Muladhara* to *Shahstradhar*. Internal deep concentration becomes meditation, and deep meditation becomes *samadhi*. After achieving such power, one can be capable of healing oneself or others. This power of healing is the inbuilt process of healing already programmed by almighty within the body of all living creature.

Practical Method of a Siddha Yogi to Achieve Spiritual Health through Meditation

Select a place which is airy and clean. Use a blanket or mat on the floor to keep yourself insulated from the ground. It is necessary as during meditation spiritual energy is aroused, it must not be dissipated or discharged through the earth, but it must be absorbed within your body and mind. Then select a suitable posture such as *Padmasana*, *Siddhasana*, *Swastikasana*, *Saralasana* and *Vajrasana* in which you can sit for the maximum duration without any pain in body parts and strain in mind. Sit in a relaxed condition so that your spinal cord remains straight. Watch your breathing. Identify the active nostril (right, left or both). If only one is active, then close your eyes and perform *Bhastrika Pranayama* to achieve the state in which both nostrils are working, i.e., active *Sushumna*. You will need some practice to reach this state. After attaining the state of active *Sushumna*, close the eyes and do "OM" chanting for five times with the full volume of voice and try to go in meditation for the duration, which should be increased with time slowly and slowly. During meditation watch yourself and be alert, no involvement with thoughts or vision if it comes in between the meditation. Do not go out of your body mentally and try to be present within the self, merely watch do not witness. When you feel strain stop the practice, continue sitting or lay down on your back till the energy aroused got dissipated in your body. I hope that you will undoubtedly feel fresh, peaceful, energetic and healed within your body and mind. I do not suggest any suitable time for meditation. It is your wish to select proper free time slot out of every day. Try to sit for meditation as long as you can, and you will go deeper and deeper in meditation. There will then, a situation will arise where you may go automatically in *samadhi* (it happens). Please always do these practices under guidance so that you will be able to understand and share your experiences and can be sure of the genuine progress in this path. For doing this meditation, it is essential that you should have faith in yourself, self-disciplined and dedicated to yourself (if you are devoting to yourself then indeed you can be dedicated to supreme conscious energy as you are the part of it). This will increase your positive energy which is the

most critical factor for self-healing, and you may achieve the power of healing others.

Conclusion

Spiritual health and spiritual healing are achievable goals. We must address them and accept them as a part of health and healing processes. If we can address the spiritual dimension of our health, the other three, i.e., physical mental and social can be achieved easily.

Conflict of Interest: None

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