

The Spiritual Scientist

An ezine for those who think!

Sickness Is Spiritual Opportunity

Question: Can spirituality help us when we are sick?

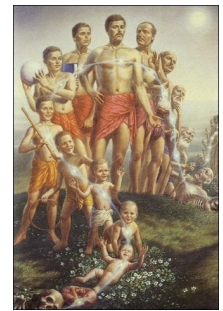
Answer: Certainly. Spirituality helps us to see sickness as a pointer to a fuller life.



Our current complete existence is two-dimensional: we are spiritual beings residing in material bodies. Our material needs and duties are natural and necessary. But if we confine our activities and ambitions to the realm of matter, we reduce ourselves to an animal existence. Animals also have souls like us, but their bodies don't allow them access to the spiritual realm. Only in the human bodies do we have the

privilege to cultivate spiritual knowledge and thus experience the fullness of life. Unfortunately, for most of us, the routine and the rush of our daily lives blind us to our privilege.

Sickness grinds our preoccupation with material activities to a partial or complete stop – at least temporarily. This no doubt causes us financial and career anxieties, but if we are perceptive, it forcefully demonstrates the instability of life at the bodily level. Almost all our current pleasures and passions depend on our body. So, when our body lets us down, we are wrenched off our pleasures and passions. Thus bereaved, either we can lament at why we alone have been stripped off the fun that everyone else is having. Or we can long to become healthy again so that we can have fun again. Certainly, we should optimistically do all that we can to regain our health. But is doing only this much enough? After all, will our body, which has temporarily let us down during sickness, not permanently let us down as we grow old and near death?



Sickness reminds us that we need to seek a life beyond our body through spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is the growth of our awareness of our joyful relationship with God, a relationship that can be entirely independent of bodily fitness. Spiritual growth is stimulated by the divine wisdom provided by scriptures like the *Bhagavad-gita* and by the devotional experience delivered by meditational practices like the chanting of the *Hare Krishna mahamantra*. The more we grow

spiritually, the more the devotional remembrance of Krishna gives us experience of the reality and the beauty of life beyond the body. The more we become habituated to devotional remembrance of Krishna, the less bodily ups and downs affect us and the more we are able to affect them. Sainly people with deep spiritual experiences – as contrasted with ritualistic religionists – face sickness with incredible composure and positivity.



So, irrespective of whether we are presently sick or not, let's start our spiritual growth now. Why should we somehow **go** through sickness when we can spiritually **grow** through sickness?

