

# Spiritual Healing

BY

SWAMI, PARAMANANDA

Author of "Path of Devotion,"  
"Vedanta in Practice," "The Way  
of Peace and Blessedness," Etc.



THE VEDANTA CENTRE  
1 Queensberry Street  
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

Reprinted from the  
VEDANTA MONTHLY  
"THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST"  
Issued by The Vedanta Centre of Boston.  
\$1.00 a year, Single Copies, 15 cents

Copyright 1914, 1916 and 1917 by Swami Paramananda

THE BRATTLE PRESS  
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

## SPIRITUAL HEALING

Is cure of disease possible and practical by other than medical means? If there is a particle of Truth in mental or spiritual healing we must not only cease to be antagonistic towards it, but must welcome it with our whole heart. This world is full of suffering and if any one can bring relief, we should not care through what channel it comes. In order to investigate these vital problems of life we must be willing to put aside our preconceived ideas and prejudices and take an attitude of openness and fairness. In all the Sacred Writings of the world accounts are given of supernatural cures. Healing of the sick, raising of the dead, drawing out of evil spirits; these are not peculiar to the life of Jesus the Christ, but are to be found in the lives of all the great Saviours, Prophets, Saints and Seers. There is one type of mind which regards all these narratives as absurd and mythical, designed to misguide the ignorant; there is another type which is over-credulous and inclined to magnify all such accounts, regarding them as special

## SPIRITUAL HEALING

miracles possible only to certain divinely appointed ones. But intellectual scepticism cannot help us, neither can blind acceptance. Our attitude should be neither to discredit nor to support on hearsay, but to investigate and learn the truth.

In the Vedic Scriptures we are told that the soul of man is beyond all mortal afflictions; that it "is free from sin, free from old age, free from death and grief, free from hunger and thirst." These words open another vista. Are we then not what we believe ourselves to be? Are these bodily conditions unreal? No; our physical life is not unreal, but it does not constitute the whole of our being. In fact, it represents but a very small part of our real life. Unfortunately, to the majority of us it seems the largest part; and it is through such misconceptions that we block the steady flow of our life-force and suffer in endless ways. Disease always indicates disturbance and disorder; and disorder invariably results when our physical tendencies lead us away from the direct influence of the Soul, or when our bodily desires gain ascendancy over our spiritual instincts. If it is true, however, that the vital part of our life is unchangeable, unaffected by suffering and disease, what is it we see around us? We recognize disease, we recognize suffering; for nearly all of us these pains and ail-



## ACTUAL HEALING

ments are facts, while that unchangeable Reality seems at most a dream.

There is no doubt that physical science has done a great deal to help mankind. It has brought relief; but that relief is not permanent, because the elements with which it deals are not permanent. It does not reach the cause of the misery; nor does it apply the ultimate remedy. "Through the power of Spirit man liveth!" Such are the words of all the Bibles of the world. The real seat of disease is more often in the mind than in the body. We know how our mental attitude can have a devitalizing influence on our physical constitution and also how it can energize it. When we are not well we often try a change of climate; and the same kind of inward change is even more helpful, that is, change of thought. If we can leave behind all thought of disease, that is the best way of eliminating it. By this method we forget the body and thereby lift ourselves out of the condition. But we cannot do this so long as we believe that our existence is dependent on this body. We must realize that we are born of God and sustained by Spirit, and therefore nothing can prevail against us. It is because we have severed our consciousness from this point of view and drifted away that we feel helpless and suffer.

The only true healing is accomplished by contact with

## SPIRITUAL HEALING

the spiritual essence; but this cannot be done in a professional way. I believe in spiritual healing. I have seen too many instances of it to doubt it. One may not believe in prayer, but prayer heals. Faith also has great healing power, because it elevates us to a plane where we can be healed. There are many, many instances of this in India. Men who have been pronounced incurable by physicians have made a long journey to touch the feet of a holy man or bathe in a sacred river or pray at a certain shrine, believing firmly that they will thereby be cured, and they have been. Whence comes this power? All power is of the Spirit. Through our whole-hearted prayer and unwavering faith we succeed in making ourselves receptive to this power. Unless we are open to its direct influence, it cannot penetrate our being and heal or help us. We see in Christ's life that He was not able to help all the people with whom He came in contact, but only those who had unquestioning faith. In St. Matthew we read: "And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when He was come into the house the blind men came to Him, and Jesus saith unto them: Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, according to your faith be it unto you. And their

## SPIRITUAL HEALING

eyes were opened." Again He spoke thus to the woman who had touched His garment: "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." And the woman was made whole from that hour. Also to the Centurion He said: "As thou hast believed, so be it unto thee." This absolute faith is the basis of all healing; even in medical science it is necessary; but it is not that kind of faith which is identified with indiscrimination and ignorance. We must always differentiate between faith and blind belief. Faith springs from purity of heart, from direct perception. As the Soul recognizes the power of God over all things and seeks to be restored by that power, a connection is established and healing is accomplished.

The Scriptures tell us that disease is the result of sin. Some define sin as wrong thinking, others as wrong doing; but whatever definition we accept, it is apparent that when we go against nature, we create certain results from which we cannot escape. But why do good people and innocent children suffer? Those who ask this question do not take into account that no one's life begins here and now. What comes here may be the result of mistakes in previous lives. Also suffering should not always be regarded as a punishment. It is often a great purifying agent. Through how many hardships and painful experiences have



## SPIRITUAL HEALING

great Souls had to pass in order to attain their greatness! Even sickness sometimes proves a blessing. It all depends on the mental attitude with which we meet it. If we allow ourselves to be dragged down and made despondent and unhappy by it, then it becomes a misfortune; otherwise it may be the means of bringing to us a new spiritual awakening.

We must analyze and find out what is our real nature. We must ask ourselves: "What part of myself is my true Self? Is it my hands or my feet? Is it my mind or my ego?" Thus we keep on lifting and lifting the thought, until we rise to a plane where we no longer identify ourselves with the body. The highest form of healing is when we do not think of the body at all. We do not seek the Spirit for a little health or a little prosperity. We love the Spirit wholly for the sake of Spirit; yet every time we come in touch with it, we are revived.

Before we reach this exalted state, however, there are certain scientific systems which will aid us. In Raja-Yoga and Hatha-Yoga, where health comes first, we are told that we must have a proper physical vehicle with which to work out our perfection. One way to do this is through the control of breath. The breath is the medium of life. When a man ceases to breathe we say he is dead. By the under-

standing and application of the science of right breathing we can keep this body in a healthy condition; because by our breathing we control the Prana or life-force. As long as this life-force continues to circulate evenly and steadily, perfect rhythm or balance will be maintained in our system and we shall enjoy good health. We know, however, from our own experience how dependent our breath is on the mind. The slightest mental agitation will destroy the regularity of the breath and cause disturbance in the system. If we are not able to bring any counteracting influence, this disturbance may develop into definite pain or disease. If, on the contrary, we can control our breathing, we shall restore the equilibrium of our mind and thereby safeguard our health. When we acquire complete breath-control, we have such a store of Prana at our command that we can send it to any part of our organism, where there may be pain or distress, and reinvigorate it. Also we can transmit it to others. This explains the sudden cures by laying on of hands and all forms of magnetic healing. One must be very careful, however, in permitting this kind of treatment; for unless the channel is pure, it may lead to serious consequences. A man may have a certain magnetic power and yet not be free from selfish personal motives; if we bring ourselves under the domination of such influences we shall

impede our higher growth, although for the time being we may gain relief from our physical ailment.

If we do not think rightly and live rightly, we cannot have health; because we generate a poison in our system by our wrong thoughts and actions which must culminate in disease. Even medical science has come to recognize that any strong passion, such as vehement anger or bitter hatred, may lead to serious illness. If, on the other hand, we live absolutely in accordance with spiritual laws, we need not concern ourselves about our health. We shall be filled spontaneously with life from the central storehouse; for whenever man can rise above the little self and become united with that which is universal and cosmic, there is no limit to his strength. It is because we fail to keep ourselves connected with this storehouse that our vitality is so often depleted. We forget whence comes our supply; and for this reason we must have fixed hours to remind us. The tendency of materialism is to make us forget. It holds out promises of prosperity, but it cuts the very root of the tree of life. If we care merely for one flower or fruit of a tree and water that instead of pouring the water on the root, the tree withers. In the same way, only as we water the root of the tree of life by daily conscious communion with the Spirit, does it grow and become productive. When we



are suffering, we must search within ourselves and see whether we are connected with the Source or not. If the connection is broken, we may know that that is the cause of our ailments. Sometimes we are unable to establish the connection for ourselves and then we are forced to seek help outside; but this cannot be effective until we have within us a certain amount of harmony and purity; for it is not all who can be helped, but only those who are open-hearted.

• It is expected of every Spiritual Teacher that his very word or touch will be full of healing. But from where does the Teacher get it? Through Divine communion and complete surrender. He merges the little self in the Infinite Self; and when anyone can rise above all sense of bodily limitation and I-ness and trust wholly in God, when his thought is based on God and he knows nothing exists outside of God, then whatever flows through his mind must be effective. A Saint says to a man: "Be thou whole," and at once he becomes whole. Why? Because constant contemplation of truth has made the Saint truthful; nothing false dwells in his heart; his will has become part of the Divine Will; therefore whatever he says must come true, because he has no thought apart from God. The power of God destroys all limitations in human life just as the light of the

sun destroys darkness. When we come to the threshold of God, the whole being is filled with power. All the Great Ones are full of this power and they have it because they do not ask anything for themselves. They give themselves wholly to the Infinite Power, hence they have power in abundance. Whenever a manifestation of the light and love of God comes, he destroys all sorrow. He becomes a constant solace to mankind and people gather round him to be healed of the wounds of this world. A Saint or Saviour is always marked by his healing grace, but we must never forget that this power is God-given and should never be used for material ends. Whoever would exercise it must always remember that it is of God, and that he must keep himself as a pure, clear channel through which the Divine Power can flow.

Spiritual healing can never be used as a profession. So long as there is the least element of self-seeking or thought of personal gain, there will always be a danger of blocking the channel of communication with the reservoir of life. The healer must feel himself wholly an instrument of God. The gift of healing the sick and comforting the afflicted comes from a Divine Source, and can only come to one who is absolutely free from self-consciousness and calculation. It must be used silently, without any noise or thought of rec-

ognition. As soon as any ulterior personal motive enters, the power diminishes; for these things cannot go hand in hand—the power of God and the ambition of man. Whenever we try to use a lofty Ideal for an ordinary purpose like money-making or self-aggrandizement, it must become degraded. In India spiritual healing has always been known, but it has never been used as a profession or as a means of livelihood. It has been practised silently and the personal element has always been eliminated. In consequence, although there are thousands of instances of healing in the lives of India's Great Teachers, very few have been recorded. Christ, too, said more than once: "Go and tell no man." Often people quote from the Bible that the laborer is worthy of his hire; but the only true wage for spiritual service can be increased spiritual power and inward joy, not any material gain. The motive in all such work must be selfless love. If our heart burns with the desire to help humanity, we shall not think of anything else. The more we feel the presence of God and the less our thought dwells on worldly gain or loss, the more shall we be filled with the spirit of love and without love there cannot be any true healing.

At every moment we have within us the possibility of health and ill-health; and when a person rouses health in us,



he only rekindles the dormant fire of life already there. Though we may obtain help from outside, we can never be permanently helped until we gain knowledge of our own true nature. Therefore Vedanta teaches "Know thy Self," because knowledge of the Higher Self is death to all the afflictions of the world. If we can gain conscious possession of the healing power within us, we do not need to look to others for help; we can heal ourselves. There are various methods by which we may accomplish self-healing,—rigid and continual denial of disease, constructive affirmations, and concentration of the mind on a counteracting influence. These may be effective, but all methods of self-exertion are fraught with the subtle danger of egotism. The highest and safest form of self-healing is when we do it involuntarily through meditation; that is, we abandon all thought of sickness or health, we lift our mind beyond all mundane things and strive to enter into the Divine Presence. When we are able to do this for a moment even, we are made whole. Although we do not ask to be restored, yet health comes.

Meditation has wonderful healing power. Sleep gives a hint of it. When we fall asleep we forget all our suffering, but infinitely more true is this in meditation. In meditation we are conscious only of the Infinite One and when

our thought is wrapped up in that One, our whole being is flooded with new life and strength. Only, when we are primarily of God and secondarily of the world do we rise above all our miseries and are healed of all our mortal pains. As the Upanishads declare: "The unbounded Infinite is bliss, there is no bliss in the finite. The Infinite is immortal, the finite is mortal. He who has reached this, if blind, ceases to be blind; if wounded, ceases to be wounded; if afflicted, ceases to be afflicted."

