

# HOLISTIC HEALTH

**New Year 2006**

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**Published by :**



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## Holistic Health

*sadāsiva samārambhām sankarāchārya madhyamām  
asmad āchārya paryantām vande guru paramparām*

There is a Sanskrit verse which gives an important message to all of us.  
That verse is –

*dharmārtha kāma mōkshānām ārōgyam mūlamuttamam  
rōgāstasya apahartāraha shrēyasō jīvitasyacha*

The *Slōka* says that *ārōgyam uttamam mūlam*. *Ārōgyam* means health. *Mūlam* means the basic resource or investment. *Uttamam Mūlam* means the most fundamental, the most significant and the most important resource is *Ārōgyam*. *This is the resource for what?*

*Dharma Artha Kāma Mōkshānām* – This resource is for accomplishing all the four goals of life both the material goals as well as spiritual goals. *Dharma* means *Punyam*, *Artha* means wealth, *Kāma* means worldly pleasures or entertainment and *Mōkshaha* means spiritual liberation. This verse says *Ārōgyam* or health is the basic resource.

It is because to get *Punyam*, I have to do noble actions and that is possible only if I have basic health. To earn money, I have to work hard. That also requires a health. If I don't have health, I cannot earn money. Not only that, but I will have to spend money also. All forms of entertainment also require basic health. Otherwise, you cannot enjoy.

Finally, *Mōksha* requires *Karma Yōga* which is based on health. Thereafter, we have to study the scriptures under the guidance of a *Guru*. For that we should sit for minimum of one hour. Health and especially, the back bone must be fit enough for that. Therefore, the scriptures repeatedly remind that never forget the fundamental truth that health is your basic resource.

*Dharmārtha kāma mōkshānām ārōgyam mūlamuttamam. What is the enemy or the robber of this health? rōgāh tasya apahartāraha* - All forms of diseases are the robbers of this health. Once the health is taken away from us, *shrēyasō jīvitasya* - Once the basic resource of health is gone, *Shrēyasaha*, all the four *Purushārdhās* also are robbed away.

Not only that, *jīvitasya* - the very survival will be in threat. Therefore, the scriptures repeatedly warn us to take care of our health which is a gift from the Lord. Even though, this is the basic fact that we all know, even though the scriptures repeatedly emphasize this, the unfortunate fact is that we never recognize the value of health when we have it.

We recognize the value of the health only when it goes away from us either temporarily or sometimes, permanently. Therefore, the scriptures say that may you regularly recognize and respect your health. When the scriptures talk about the health, they have got a holistic approach. They do not confine to physical health only because the physical body is not the entire personality.

Physical body is only the external-most, grossest layer. We do have an inner mental or psychological personality as well as an intellectual, rational personality. Therefore, when the scriptures talk about our health, it talks about the physical, the mental as well as the intellectual personality and the health of all the three.

We have to consider the health of all these three layers because these three are interconnected, complementary. We can never maintain the health of one without taking into account the health of the other two. Lock sided approach, partial approach will not be successful. Therefore, scriptures say that may you maintain all the threefold health carefully.

*Then, the question is how can I maintain the health of all these three?*

Scriptures themselves give certain tips, certain strategies to maintain the threefold health. The first one is the physical health. Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavadgīta*, sixth chapter emphasizes four disciplines to be carefully taken care of to maintain the health and to prevent ill health which the doctors are emphasizing now.

Krishna has mentioned four fundamental disciplines to maintain the physical health. *What are they?* Krishna says –

*yuktāhāra vihārasya yukta chēshtasya karmasu  
yukta swapnāvabōdhasya yōgō bhavati dukhaha*

The first discipline is discipline of food. So, may you watch the quality the quantity and the frequency of eating assuming that you are giving some gap. If there is no gap at all, I cannot talk about the frequency. Assuming there is some gap, the scriptures repeatedly warn - ‘don’t eat junk food’. Quality and quantity may you maintain. Never fill up your stomach.

*pūrayēth ashanēna ardham trutīyam vudakēnatu  
vāyō sanchāranārthāya chaturdham avashēshayēt*

Leave some internal space so that the food can move a little bit. Some elbow room is presented. So, quality, quantity and frequency and the scriptures talk a lot. I don’t want to go to the details. The scriptures point out that even emotional and intellectual health depends upon the type of food that one consumes.

*āhāra shuddhou satva shuddhihi satva shuddhou dhruvā smrutihī*

Even spiritual knowledge is influenced by the quality, the quantity etc. of the food. *Āhāra* is number one. And the second one is *Vihāraha*. *Vihāraha* means movement. If I am going to keep on consuming and lead a sedentary life without any motion, it is against all health rules.

Even to change the channel in TV, I need not get up as the remote is there. Therefore, if a person only consumes, there is only input and there is no output. Then, it is against all health rules. Therefore, Krishna says *Vihāraha*, movement or regular exercise in the form of *Prāna* or *Yōga* or walking etc.

*Vihāraha* means walking. Krishna says regular walking is compulsory. So, *Yukta Āhāraha* and *Yukta Vihāraha* are the first two disciplines. Never say I don't have time. As somebody nicely said, if you don't have some time voluntarily to give for health, later you will be forced to give double the time for ill-health.

Therefore, *Vihāra* is important. Then, the third factor is *yukta chēshṭasya karmasu*. May you have healthy occupation also. There are so many occupations now which violate all the rules of health. But the advantage is that they pay a lot. When the money is attractive, many people take up such occupations.

They get lot of money and in the process, they are squandering health. Such people should remember the proverb – ‘Man initially squanders his health in search of wealth. Then, he squanders his wealth in search of health and ultimately, loses both’. Therefore, don't be over attracted by money.

May you make sure that whatever occupation you have, does not violate the health rule. Pressure of work, junk food, no exercise, stress in the office and no sleep, all these are an ideal condition for *Yamadharma*. So, the third condition is to take up a healthy occupation.

The fourth and equally important one is *yukta swapnāvabōdhasya* – Kindly give the proper amount of sleep that is required by the body. Rest is required for rejuvenation. Otherwise, you will have to spend

money and go for *Yōga Nidra* courses. But because of health problem, one will have to take pills and all those things.

Therefore, the fourth condition is proper sleep. So, four strategies are *proper food, proper exercise, proper occupation* and *proper sleep*. Whoever maintains these four, can follow material goals as well as spiritual goal. Krishna says *yōgō bhavati dukhaha*. *Yōga* will become successful only for a healthy person.

These are the four rules regarding physical health. Then comes the maintenance of mental health. Mind is interior and subtler equipment. Therefore, maintenance of mental health is relatively tougher. *What do you mean by mental health?* Not being afflicted by disturbing emotions.

If the disturbing emotions take charge of my mind take a hostage of my mind, my mind is afflicted, preoccupied, tensed and sick. That mind is not available for any constructive work that I want to do. Therefore, a fit and healthy mind is that which knows how to manage disturbing, afflicting emotions like anxiety, worry, fear, anger, hatred etc.

They are all disturbing emotions which can stifle the mind, which can immobilize the mind. Therefore, management of the emotions becomes an important exercise to maintain mental health. One fact is that we can never avoid emotions because the job of the mind is to constantly generate emotions and every emotion is very powerful. Somebody nicely said that emotion means energy in motion. It is very powerful.

Krishna very clearly says in the *Gīta* – Arjuna, you can never try to avoid emotions. *Mōksha* does not mean avoidance of emotions. It is not destruction of emotions, a person without emotions cannot be even a human being because the humaneness of the human being is because of emotions. Therefore, Krishna said –

*indriyasyēndriyasyārthē rāga dvēshou vyavasthitou  
tayōr na vasham āgachēt touhyasya paripanthinou*

Emotions are generated. We can never complain against it. We have to learn to handle them in such a way that they don't take me a hostage and make me non-functional. Krishna tells elsewhere –

*shaknōtīhaiva ya sōdhum prāk shareera vimōkshanāth  
kāma krōdhōdbhavam vēgam sa yukta sa sukhī naraha*

An integrated and healthy person is one who is able to withstand the impact of the emotion. *Vēga* means impact, attack, or onslaught. So, the one who can withstand, handle, survive and continue with living is an integrated person. He alone can get happiness in life. Krishna goes one step further. *saha naraha* - that person alone deserves the title *Naraha*.

*Now the question is how can we manage or handle the emotions?* Here also, we can make use of some strategies. The scriptures give some tips to handle. I will briefly mention four. Here also, we will see four methods. The first method is communication.

If somebody around me, at home or in the office or any other place with whom I move regularly, is the cause of any emotional disturbance, either through speech or action, disturbs my mind, we need not silently suffer. We need not suffer bottling the emotions inside. We can certainly communicate the difficulty to the other person.

The only rule is that it is a carefully controlled communication instead of an emotional outburst. Many people are given to emotional outburst and they justify that by saying that emotional suppression is dangerous and therefore, they are releasing. The scriptures say that emotional outburst is never a remedy for emotional suppression.

If emotional outburst is used as a remedy, the remedy is worse than the problem itself. It is exactly like from the frying pan a person jumped. It is a remedy. Jumping is a remedy and certainly that person got out of

the frying pan. The only problem is that down below there was fire. So, that remedy is not an intelligent solution.

Therefore, remember that emotional outburst can never be a solution. *Then, what is the solution?* Careful, well thought out communication and that too proper communication is the solution. We never say that the other person is wrong when the other person misbehaves. It is because the moment you blame the other person, we are activating the ego and other person will defend saying that you have a problem.

On the other hand, if we approach saying that we have a problem. It is not the problem with another person because mostly others do not plan to hurt us or intend to hurt us. They are not even aware of the fact that their behavior is hurting us. But because of our peculiar condition, we manage (succeed) to get hurt. We are experts in that.

The other people don't want to hurt us. In-fact, when we communicate, they are often surprised and feel bad that their action has caused hurt. Therefore, method number one is that I approach the concerned person and openly express that I have a problem. If you can help me out by doing this or not doing this, I will be happy.

If it can be carefully communicated, we will be surprised to see that many problems are very simply solved because others will be willing to adjust. So, method number one is a well thought out communication to the concerned person. If we are not able to communicate for various reasons or we have tried before and we got into trouble or due to some reason or the other, the concerned person is not available for communication.

Then, the second method is expression of our emotions elsewhere. Instead of suppression, I very carefully express somewhere. We may have a friend, a close friend or a close relative with someone or the



other with whom we can share, including God. It is because people have their own *Rāmāyanam*.

Therefore, people don't have time to listen to my stories. *Bhagawān* is unemployed. He doesn't have anything else to do - *shantākāram bhujaga shayanam*. So, we can always share our emotions with him either in spoken form or in written form. But the idea is never bottle up the emotions. It can create serious problem. Therefore, the second method is expression.

First method is communication to the concerned person. The second method is expression or sharing. Suppose, that is also not possible as there is no other person available and this person is not used to sharing with God. That is where *Ishta Dēvata* is highly useful. God as a personal friend is very useful.

God as mother, God as father, God as brother, God as companion, as a person is very highly useful. *Tyagaraja* and many other devotees poured their emotions to the Lord. So, second method is possible if we have that *Ishta Dēvata Bhakti*. If first two methods are not possible, there is a third method called neutralization.

Suppose I cannot communicate, suppose I cannot express and share with others then, I can neutralize the emotion within the mind itself. Because only if it remains, there will be pressure. There would be no problem if I diffuse the emotion inside itself. *How to do that?*

Neutralization is based on one important principle. That principle is that all emotions are in the form of thoughts only. It is nothing but a particular pattern of the thinking which repeatedly happens like a broken gramophone record. You will find that the same line will be repeated. Like that, the mind goes over and over on a particular topic in the form of thought flow.

Thoughts can never continue in the mind without my cooperation. Every thought requires my cooperation for its continuation just as a cycle requires constant pedaling for the continuous running. If I stop pedaling, the cycle may run for some distance but it cannot continue. Now, all the emotions arise in the mind because of some person or some event.

The arrival of emotion is not under my control. Some event has triggered or that person's language or some business loss has triggered. The arrival of emotion is not under my control. Often, it catches me unaware because I don't know what is going to happen when. Events do not send me advance notice.

Therefore, I need not feel bad about the generation of emotions because it is not under my control. But whether they should continue on and on, I can decide with my will. It requires conviction and will power. *What is the conviction?* Continuation of the emotion does not help anyone.

That person has hurt me once and he has gone. Sometimes, he might even be dead also. But it is my foolishness that I go on and on and on and create the situation again and again and hear his words again and again and go over the emotion again and again. That person hurts me only once but I keep on hurting myself by playing the record again and again.

I don't solve the problem by repeatedly dwelling on any emotion. I never solve any problem and nothing happens to the others or family members. I am only spoiling my health. Once I am convinced that the perpetuation of the thought is because of me and me alone, with will power I can disengage from that thought pattern.

The moment it arises, I have given an auto suggestion to the mind that I am not going to support that line of thinking. I disengage myself and therefore, I don't allow that thought to continue and I am free from the

fear thought, jealousy thought, anger thought, and any particular thought. Thus, I change the thought pattern and suggest myself that I am relaxed. I am free from that particular thought pattern.

Hereafter, I will never allow that to continue. The moment it arises, I turn my attention away. This method is neutralization of the thought by a counter thinking. I am free from the emotional burden. In the *Shāstra*, it is called *Pratipaksha Bhāvana*. Instead of saying I am distressed, say I am de-stressed, I am relaxed. This method is called neutralization method.

Then comes the fourth and final method. Suppose, the first three methods are not possible, we will try one more. If you find that you are helpless and if you feel that you cannot handle this because it is too overwhelming. If you say that I am too weak a person to handle this enormous, intense emotional problem, the scriptures say, *why can't you take the guidance of the Lord?*

*Bhakthi* becomes very useful. I can visualize my *Ishta Dēvata*, Rama or Krishna and bring that Lord into the heart (not outside). Internalize Rama or Krishna. *Ēshwara sarva bhūtānām hruddēshē arjuna tishtati. Bhagawān* is waiting to enter if we are willing to give the admission pass.

Krishna tells Arjuna – *mat chittah sarva durgāni mat prasādāt tarishyasi* Arjuna, you can cross over all emotional pains. *Durga* means difficult pains which appear as insurmountable pains. Even the so called insurmountable pains, *tarishyasi* - you can surmount. *How can you do that? Mat Chittaha* - If you keep me in your heart, I will serve as a shock absorber.

With shared responsibility, start a partnership company. I and the Lord are together and the burden of the emotion is shared between the two. Take the emotional pain and you hold on to one string because you have

fallen in love with that and another string you give to the Lord and together share the emotion.

Pray to the Lord, 'Oh, Lord let me get over this at the earliest, let me become resilient. Let me bounce back from this difficult situation and sooner or later start with my original course'. Somebody nicely said that suppose, there is a ball made up of clay and a ball made up of rubber. Both of them you put down.

*What will be the difference between the clay ball and the rubber ball?* If the clay ball falls, it is permanently stuck whereas, if the rubber ball falls, it bounces back. *Āryaha* is one who has got a bouncing back resilient mind.

*yathā kanduka pātēna utpatasyāryah patanyapi  
tathātu anāryah patati mrutpinda patanam yatha*

*Mruth Pinda Patanam* means don't be a clay ball. Only if you have clay in the head, you will become a clay ball. Problems will come. Everybody has faced problems. We have to exhaust our Karma so let it happen. You might not be able to function for some time. Have a mourning period also but don't convert the entire life into mourning period.

Not only that, we distribute our sorrow freely to others also (Sorrow *Dānam*). Krishna says tragedies will come, forget, bounce back, New Year is coming, start living instead of getting on. Start living and take charge of your life. Thus, one can use communication, expression, neutralization and fourth one I would like to call it dilution.

Shared with the Lord, you dilute the impact. With this we take care of mental health. The third one is the intellectual health. For the intellect, there are the three diseases. They are ignorance, doubt and misconception regarding everything. *Agnyāna Samshaya Viparyaya* –

ignorance, doubt and misconception about everything especially, regarding the goal of life and the means.

The age of 78, in a question answer session they ask what the goal of life is. So, may you clearly know what is goal and may you know the means to attain that. The best help to do that is the scriptural study. We saw in the *Uddhava Gītā - pitru dēva manushyānām vēdashakshuhu tavēshwara*.

*Vēda* is the third eye which is indicated by the *Tilakam*, the *Bottu* that we apply. The other two eyes represent reasoning and perception. We have got three eyes namely *Shruti*, *Yukti*, and *Anubhava* - Scriptures reasoning and perception. One eye is perception, another eye is reasoning or science and the third eye is scriptures. Integrate perception, science and scriptures.

For us, science is not against Veda. Veda is not against science. We integrate all the three and learn about the means and end. *Sādhyā sādhanayō rāpi* - Uddhava said in the *Gītā*. Thus, by the study of scriptures, we come to know what the goal is and how to accomplish it. The scriptures will help us. A healthy intellect is one which is very clear about the means and the end.

Once we have got this physical, mental and intellectual health, success is ours. In our tradition, the presiding deity for health is *Surya Bhagawān - ārōgyam bhāskarādichhēt*. Therefore, only in our tradition, we start the day with the worship of Sun. *Sandhyā Vandanam* which is one of the most basic and efficacious daily worship is one of the best prayers for health.

*pashyēma sharadashatam jīvēma sharadashatam  
nandāma sharadashatam mōdāma sharadashatam*

I pray to *Surya Bhagawān* who has got all the *Prāna Shakti*. Prāna Shakti means threefold health. Surya Bhagawān is the source of Prānic

energy. I seek that energy from the Surya to get the threefold health. If I don't know *Sandhyā Vandanam*, I have got *Āditya Hrudayam*, one of the best regular morning prayers for threefold health. If we don't have time for *Āditya Hrudayam* then, we have got a simple *Stōtra* also. It is a beautiful prayer.

*bhānō bhāskara mārtaṇḍa chandarashmē divākara  
āyur ārōgyam aishwaryam vidyām dēhi namōstute*

O Sun God, give physical, mental and intellectual health and *Aishwaryam*. Aishwaryam means mastery over my own life. If I have health, I have confidence and I feel I am in-charge. Ill health robs my confidence and therefore, I pray to Sun God to let me take charge of my life and succeed.

So, we will just chant this prayer. I will chant and you can repeat after me. The prayer will be put on the notice board. You can also take down. It is a beautiful, daily prayer for the threefold health.

*bhānō bhāskara mārtaṇḍa chandarashmē divākara  
āyur ārōgyam aishwaryam vidyām dēhi namōstute*

With blessing of the *Surya Bhagawān*, let us all have physical, mental and intellectual health and have a successful 2006.

*Poornamadah Poornamidam Poornaath Poornam Udachyathe  
Poornasya Poornamaadaaya Poornameva Vasishyathe*

*Om shanti shanti shantihi*



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