

The Message of Bhagavad Gita to the Nurse

By Mr. T. Basappa*

IN NO OTHER AREA of work, does a person come across as much misery, pain, distress, dejection, despondency, suffering, anxiety, helplessness and dependency, as in health care services. The health care workers are constantly influenced by these. When they have to work in situations without adequate equipment and supplies, they are bound to develop a state of dejection. Verily these workers need a special type of personality if they have to function effectively. They must be strong and healthy. They must possess sensitive minds capable of understanding subtle emotions and able to show sympathy and love in all situations. They must possess efficient hands, loving hearts and clear heads. The health workers, especially the nursing personnel, have a duty and a battle to fight.

In order to develop such a personality, turn to the Bhagavad Gita. The teachings of Gita help to dispel our attitude of hopelessness and despondency. It instills a desire for work, to develop the qualities of mind, faith in God and the attainment of self-realisation through ones own obligatory occupation and Dharma.

Lord Krishna says : "Yield not to feebleness, cast off this petty faint heartedness" (2-3). "It is a sin if you do not do your duty and carry on the righteous battle" (2-31).

The Gita teaches us the importance of a balanced development of cognition, emotion and the will. It gives equal importance to the three aspects of our Psyche-Dhyana through emotional control, Karma, through, unattached performance of our daily activities and Jnana by acquiring knowledge which helps us to discriminate. "It is essential to discriminate between the desirable and forbidden actions, for the effects of actions are inscrutable" (4-27).

*Asst. Professor, College of Nursing, Bangalore.

A nurse must be able to "act" with "devotion", "knowing" that she is doing the right thing. What are the essential qualities of a nurse? Here the Gita gives a list : "Non-injury (Ahimsa), Truth, Absence of anger, Renunciation, Serenity, Absence of calumny, Compassion to others, uncovetousness, Gentleness, Modesty, Absence of Fickleness" (16-2). "Vigour, Forgiveness, Fortitude, Purity of body and mind, Absence of Hatred and Pride (humility)—these qualities belong to those fit for a divine state" (16-3).

Gita also tells us about the importance of character and conduct. It emphasises the need for the control of our bodily and mental desires which give us pleasure.

"Just as a gale pushes away a ship on the water, the mind that yields to the roving pleasures carries away (destroys) his discrimination" (2-67). "Mind is, doubtless, restless and hard to control, but with determined effort and practice it can be controlled" (6-35). "The excited senses impetuously carry away the mind of even the wise man who is striving for perfection" (2-60).

Gita is not satisfied with explaining the difficulties in this field. It says :

"He is a hypocrite who controls his organs (bodily craving) but thinks of sense objects (pleasure) in his mind" (3-6).

The field of the nurse is such that offers many temptations. One has to be careful not to be ruined. The nurse must be always active, for dedicated service itself is a sacrifice (Yajna). Idleness and laziness provide time to brood over pleasures.

"Brooding about pleasures results in attachment which in turn produces frustration and aggressive emotion. Anger in its turn leads to excitement and confusion, loss of memory and finally destroys the higher faculty of 'Reason' (Budhi). When reason is lost, everything is ruined. (2-62-63)

Gita also gives another idea to develop the harmonious personality.

"Whatever the leaders (Sreshta) do is followed by others ; people go by the example set by them" (3-21).

The senior members of the nursing profession should take note of this. This example includes all the activities while 'on duty' or 'off duty'. Character and conduct are part of the personality and one cannot be a good nurse without being a good person.

Gita gives suggestions even about the need for temperance in satisfying our basic needs.

"A wise man does not eat too much, or too little, but eats wisely (Yukta), does not sleep too much or too little, but regulates his sleep properly, and is temperate in his recreations" (6-16, 17).

A nurse should be able to understand other people and their feelings. "One is regarded as supreme, who judges pleasure and pain in all others by the same standard as he applies it to himself" (16-32).

It is the golden rule for the nurse. The nurse does not discriminate her clientele.

"He stands supreme who has equal regard for friends, companions, enemies, neutrals, arbitors, the hateful, the relatives, the saints and sinners" (6-9).

A nurse shall not regard a person's creed, colour, caste or religion. Gita goes a step further.

"In the eyes of the wise all are equal—a learned Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an untouchable" (5-18).

Others cannot infuse good qualities into one's personality. They have to be acquired by oneself.

"Let a man raise himself by his own self, let him not debase himself, for he is himself his friend and himself his foe" (6-6).

Responsibility for development is placed on the person himself. There is no place for self-debasement in a well developed person.

"A wise man is not perturbed by adversity, does not crave for happiness and is free from fondness, fear or anger" (2-56).

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Silastic Implant

A New Method for Birth Control

By Miss P. Arora*

THE SILASTIC Implant is an injectable chemical stick which controls fertility for a year from the date of introduction. This implant contains norethindrine, acetate 30 Mg, which is injected subcutaneously and acts on endometrial lining of the uterus. This delays the formation of decidua for the growth and development of a fertilised ovum.

Procedure

A woman is advised to come for the implant after the menstruation in order to eliminate the factor that she is not pregnant at the time of introduction. She is advised a thorough bath with soap and water on the day of introduction. A lateral side of the thigh is exposed after the woman lies in the semi-prone position. The part of the thigh for implantation is cleaned with spirit and a sterile towel is spread under the thigh. Xylocaine 2% is injected on the non-hairy area with a 2cc syringe. The chemical stick with the help of an artery forceps is put in the trocar and the cannula is introduced then to push the stick in the thigh after the trocar is injected subcutaneously. Both the trocar and cannula are then taken out and the part sealed with the Tr. Benzoin Co. and allowed to dry. Time of insertion can also be concurrent with abortion as well as post-abortion.

Articles Required

The following are the articles required for the implantation.

(1) Sponge holder-1; (2) Trocar & Cannula-1; (3) Syringe glass 2cc-1; (4) Needles-2; (5) Artery Forceps-2 pairs; (6) Small bowls-2; and (7) Sterile towel for draping-1.

Chemicals: (1) Spirit in a sterile bowl; (2) Tr. Benzoin co. seal in a sterile bowl; (3) Xylocaine 2%.

*P.H.S. Comprehensive Rural Health Project, A.I.I.M.S., Ballabgarh, Haryana.

After-Care

The woman is advised: (i) not to remove the seal in order to prevent sepsis; (ii) to come for endometrial biopsy and blood test three weeks after the insertion to check the proliferative or secretive phases taking place in the uterus. Four such consecutive tests are essential which are to be repeated every three weeks after the menstruation; (iii) To report for periodical check up of blood, endometrial biopsy, basal body temperature, changes in menstrual cycle and cervical mucous and also weight gain.

Follow up in the home for those patients who are irregular in check up is essential.

Complication: Sepsis is extremely rare if insertion is done under the aseptic environment and wound is not exposed to dust.

Haemorrhage: is very rare in the patients for whom it is suited well.

Contraindications: (1) Cervical erosion; (2) Endometritis; (3) Fibroma of the Uterus; (4) Severe anaemia; (5) Diabetes; (6) Cardiac & Kidney complications and (7) Eclampsia.

Preparation of the Woman

Physical: Before the introduction of the implant the woman has to be prepared physically and psychologically. A general examination is done to see that all the systems are functioning normally. Haemoglobine is tested to eliminate anaemia. Routine Urine examination is done to exclude diabetes or any other kidney complications. Per vagina includes exclusion of cervical erosion and fibroma etc.

Psychological: Make the women talk to a patient who has had the implant so that all her doubts are cleared. eg: Is it a painful phenomenon? Will she have abnormal periods? Will she get pregnant as the uterus is not touched at all? Arrange a pre-

visit to the Operation Theatre and if possible a woman being injected may be shown to her in order to allay her fears.

A word with the couple is essential to gain their confidence by explaining that the injection does control fertility for a year and the woman is taken to the O.T. for five minutes only as the introduction of the implant under the aseptic environment is essential so that it does not give rise to any infection later.

Silastic implant supercedes all the family planning methods. It is simple, cheap and comfortable. This method does not give any ugly looking scar on the abdomen as seen in the case of an abdominal tubectomy. A woman is free to move about to attend her normal chores.

Nurses Role

All categories of nurses working in the field and in the Hospitals should encourage Silastic implant for woman for better spacing and to have a happy home and a happy family life. Teaching can be done along with Health Education or M.C.H. programme. They should give emphasis that this method avoids the use of any other contraceptive method.

Gita — (Contd. from page 379)

The belief in God and meditation help to develop tranquillity.

"In tranquillity all sorrow is destroyed. The intellect of the tranquil minded is soon anchored in equilibrium". (2-65)

Meditation shall not be superficial and mechanical.

"Serene and fearless, firmly practicing Brahmacharya, subdued in mind, one shall meditate on Me". (6-15).

The nurse shall, have a goal in life. Unselfish service to the suffering is not an end in itself but a means for a higher goal, and that goal is to attain Salvation to become one with HIM. This is the message of Gita to the nurse. Every page of the Great Scripture provides plenty of food for thought for the nurse who is striving for perfection. □