

Ageing Gracefully

Hegde BM

***“Age, I abhor thee,
Youth, I adore thee.”
Shakespeare.***

One does not have to abhor aged people at all. I do not agree with Shakespeare. One could grow up gracefully and could achieve many things even at the ripe old age. There are examples of people who have been creative even in their eighties and nineties. How to grow old gracefully is a million-dollar question. Any society, which does not have the wise counsel of its elderly people, is a poor society. Age mellows people a lot. If one is a thinker, age teaches many useful lessons. Life is not long enough for each of us to make all the mistakes ourselves and then learn from them. We could learn from others mistakes and, in this direction, the thinking elders are a great boon.

The craze for money and power seems to be the cause of degradation of societal morals and ethics. The bad effects of this are seen in all walks of life. Competition, which is alien to human physiology, is the key word these days. Competition breeds mediocrity in every sphere, resulting in falling standards of morality, ethics, and common courtesies. This is not new. Look at what Shakespeare wrote about the state of affairs then:

***“For in the fatness of these pury times,
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg.”***

Hamlet.

If one goes deep into this malady, one quickly realizes that the root cause of our entire competitive ethos starts with our present system of education at the primary level. The innocent child, born with only

two basic instincts of self preservation and procreation, is injected with the poisons of pride, ego, jealousy, hatred and anger right from the first examination in school where we encourage all these by grading students into different ranks.

Ageing starts from the day one is made in the mother's womb, soon after the father's spermatozoan enters the mother's ovum. The resultant zygote is only a small speck of protein weighing just 0.0000000000001 gm. This little speck of protein is the beginning of man. The zygote starts life at that very second with a consciousness, which gets to know about all other living things on this planet postori and priori. The consciousness runs the person from that time till he eventually dies. The difference between life and death could only be made out from observation by others. This is the Schrodinger's cat hypothesis. All zygotes thus formed have one certainty in this world, which is death. All other aspects of life are uncertain.

Thus defined, ageing starts from the day you are made, and goes on ceaselessly until death. In other words, ageing is a constant change from conception to death. The most important stimulus for ageing is the human consciousness; which, in simple terms, boils down to the vagaries of the human mind. Where, then, is the human mind? Never mind! The mind certainly is not in the brain or the heart or any other anatomic structure at the cellular level. ***Mind is a sub-cellular, sub-atomic quantum concept.*** It transcends all the physical laws of deterministic predictability. Even the Einstein's theory of motion that states that “nothing could move faster than light” does not apply to the human mind. Mind could travel faster than light and could even communicate unconventionally by ***teleportation.***

Mind has the greatest influence on all bodily functions that physical sciences understand now. The mind, in short, runs the body. For every change in the body there are reasons in the mind and every alteration in the mind and human feelings would have to have corresponding reverberations in the body. Mind could

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influence every single cell in the human system, of which there are 10^{14} cells in all.

The human consciousness (mind) is at the root of all our illnesses as well as our happiness. The inner mind is always happy to be of some use to others and is not very happy to hurt someone else. The universal consciousness demands the survival of all creatures in this Universe. The rules of the game are such that very bad people with malice would have to be, per force, curtailed in their demonic behaviour in society. This may be one of the reasons *why* one gets illness in the first place. Modern science does not tell us why does one get a disease, but tries to explain as to *how* one gets an illness. It was the great brain in Medicine, Dr. Charles Sherrington, who at the age of 42 became the youngest professor of Physiology at the University of Liverpool in England. Medical students would remember Sherrington very well as he has contributed a lot to medical science. It was he who said in 1899 AD, while accepting his new assignment:

“Positive sciences could never answer the question why. They could, at best, answer the questions how or how much but not the question why! A physiologist could say how does the heart contract, but would never be able to why does the heart contract; he would be able to define death but would not be able to define life! Ratio rei is, therefore, not reason why.”

He has come very close to quantum physics, which says that life could only be observed by the *eye of the beholder*, (Schrodinger's cat). Later in the year 1937, aged 90 years, Sherrington gave a Lumleyn Lecture at the Royal College of Physicians of London, entitled *Wisdom of the Human Body*.

All those thinkers have also found it impossible to understand the human mind completely. It is now known that the human consciousness runs every cell in the human body from the time of conception. Cancers to common colds are the result of unhappiness and its bad effects on our consciousness and, consequently, on all our body cells. Even the abnormal heart rhythms that we have been treating as an aberration of the heart's function without much success have been now traced to the human mind!

What pleases the human consciousness is the universal consciousness of *Universal Love*. What hurts it is anything against this dictum. Ageing that happens from day one of our existence would, per force, depend

on this principle. Love and compassion slows the ageing process while hatred and anger along with ego, pride, jealousy, and fear would enhance the ageing process. The secret of keeping your cells healthy and young (as much as possible), is Universal love. This message has to go down to the next generation before they get converted like us to hate one another.

We, in the present generation, could not get the benefit of this message, except in a limited sense, since we have had all the bad feelings all along for our brethren in society. We could still benefit if we change now! but the next generation could change all that for their good if we let them grow up with the innocence that they are born with. *One positive way of achieving that would be to avoid examinations and ranking in schools till the child attains the age of fifteen, when most of the foundations for future life vis-à-vis the human mind are well set.*

I wonder if I would be able to convince our powers-that-be in charge of primary education, the most important part of a nation's growth, about this message. Healthy citizens of the future need healthy education to keep their body cells young and healthy. Copying the west in keeping our old elderly comparatively comfortable is secondary. If we could teach our young the secret of love and compassion, they would look after their elders as in the past. They used to venerate their teachers, parents and God. Times have changed with the western ways getting more fashionable with our younger generation, who think that the Indian wisdom of yore is only a myth and the reality is to live a rat race of living with hatred and greed.

Medical science and quantum physics have proved them wrong and have shown how modern and scientific are the Indian thoughts of the Vedas, even in this field of trying to keep oneself young and healthy. The West is now anxious to go back to the large family system of the East, especially India. Since they cannot change overnight they are forming so-called *church groups*. These are a group of unit families that live like a large family in every way possible, helping each other. The latter gives the *sense of belonging* that keeps the mind happy and the body cells healthy and young. The long-term solution for the problems of our elderly is to inculcate this new philosophy in our young minds.

Morphological ageing has very little to do with cellular ageing. One could still see many white haired elderly looking people still happy and healthy while the

young looking people could have the most devastating illnesses. Cellular ageing depends on the mind to a great extent and the mind is *not a cellular concept but a sub-cellular-sub-atomic concept*. Happy mind resides in a healthy body and vice versa. The modern epidemics of the west, *divorce and suicide*, both originate in the mind. Wars are born in the minds of men and not in the battlefields.

The solution to all the ills of the world is to ensure a healthy mind in our next generation by the methods advocated above. It may not be very appealing to most of the readers, as this concept has not reached medical textbooks yet. *“Truth”, said Aristotle, “could influence only half a score of men in a given century or time, while falsehood and mystery would drag millions by the nose.”*

Listen to the sane voice of the Indian wisdom:

***Prasanna Aathma Indriya Manaha Swastha
Ithyabhideeyathe.***

[Happiness of the soul, senses, and the mind would ensure good health definitely]

How to achieve that?

***Janaha Naanaa vachasam.....Naanaa
Dharmanaam, ...Napaschuraanthi.***

[People in this world speak different tongues and belong to different religions; but please give me a thousand milch cows so that they could all be fed]

These two thoughts from the Vedic literature give credence to my hypothesis above that we have to keep our mind happy to keep ourselves healthy as *long as we live; death being the only certainty in life*, we cannot afford to hate anyone due to any reason. Even the different religions that were going to come up later were predicted in those Vedic lines; but they have also got to be loved and respected as one's own religion! I have not been able to find anything more laudable than this. Long live mankind on this planet! Love everyone to live happily till you die. Ageing would then be not a problem for the east as also the west. Death can never be postponed, nor avoided; as it is against the laws of nature.

The following Ameri-Indian song tells it all.

***“I eat when I am hungry,
I drink when I am thirsty,
If heavens don't fall down,
I shall certainly live till I die.”***

The only thing that we could try to do is to live well till death. Modern medicine and all the scientific knowledge, put together, could just about do that; if only we could change our attitude to life as enunciated above.

Announcement

17th Annual Conference of Hypertension Society of India is to be held on 21st, 22nd and 23rd Nov. 2008 at Kalaivanar Arangam, Chennai-600002. The conference will have master teacher sessions, orations, guest lectures, meet the professors and free papers.

Upto 31 st Sep. 2008	After 31 st Sep. 2008
For the members Rs. 1000/- For non members Rs. 1200/- For PG's Rs. 800/-	For the members Rs. 1500/- For non members Rs. 2000/- For PG's Rs. 1000/-

Delegate fees may be send by draft in favour of HSICON 2008 payable at Chennai stating the name and address of the delegate. Abstract and free papers are welcome from the delegates.

Theme of the Conference:

Hypertension silent epidemic of 21st century and target organ damage.

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