



## **ALCOHOLISM IS AN OBSTACLE FOR SPIRITUALITY BUT SPIRITUALITY HAS SOLUTION FOR ALCOHOLISM**

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### **Abstract:**

*Through some observed facts and indentified studies it has been made clear that alcoholism and spirituality never go hand in hand, since the former disturbs the later but, if approached, the later acts itself as a solution for the former. Since Alcoholism is a three folded disease, it affects all the three identifiable entities of a human being; physical, mental and spiritual. Alcohol affects the union among these faculties. If any one of these lags behind in coordination, there would be no possibility to grow spiritually. One cannot even think of it. But on the other hand, with a genuine wish, if an alcoholic attempts to do spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, yoga, and so on, that will turn him into more optimistic about the life and more devotional towards the God. This will help in arresting the habit of drinking and craving.*

**Key Words:** Alcoholism, Spirituality, Drinking & Spiritual Practices

### **Alcoholism as a Barrier:**

Generally all human being are embodied with three gunas. Under the influence of alcohol one loses control over the mind and consciousness. Mental well being and the activation of consciousness in general are naturally the domains of sattva. Predominant nature of sattva is the key to general wellbeing, creativity and spirituality. But alcohol, depending on the level of ingestion, always plays the role in exposing tamsic and rajasic gunas, thus affects the calmness and clarity in mind, which are the set essential for a spiritual start up and in towards the journey.

Alcohol damages the abilities of being humane. While under the influence of alcohol, alcoholic behave more like animalistic and become violent, since they cannot control the base instincts. Because Alcoholics' brains process emotions differently with a range of odd behaviors, which then end with disturbed mental and environmental settings; this is totally against the basic requisite for spirituality.

Alcohol is a peculiar substance which absorbs up the life energy/bio-magnetism of those which has its contact with. This is because, chemically, certain definite chemical compound made up of certain chemical atoms held together in a particular way.(Annie Besant). Spiritual practices or having a thought to be spiritual arise only when the man is completely positive and packed with vital energy. But Ingestion of alcohol affects both the qualities.

Ingestion of alcohol abates mind-body connection and co operation by affecting brain's sensory input. If the mind-body connection is dulled, it is impossible to engage even with menial works. But spirituality means a higher realm of existence; for it should always be supported through great determination and persistence. Without a healthy body and mind and a strong coordination between, one can never enter into that higher sphere.

Spiritual growth is inextricably connected with well being of body, mind and the soul. But on the contrast alcohol damage people physically, mentally and spiritually, as a result the individual cannot even enjoy a normal growth in life.

The Buddhist precept lays importance to refrain from the use of alcohol and other intoxicants relates to its potential interference with "mindfulness", a central

spiritual practice in the tradition (Roth, 2012). Intoxication leads to intoxicated thinking, which turns one into mindlessness. Even at a collective level, prevalence of intoxication can interrupt and replace one's nears and dears spiritual growth as well.

### **Spirituality as a Solution:**

Usually spirituality is conjured with the shadows of religion, but spirituality has lot more with it than religion. Religion is one of the modes to spirituality. Non-religious people do even have spiritual needs.

Lack of will power and self discipline will be resulted as a result of physical sensitivity to alcohol, a mental obsession to keep on drinking and an underlying spiritual malady. Unless these three aspects of the condition are treated, the individual will not be able to escape their addiction. Spiritual orientation towards life will develop will power and self discipline; they bestow the inner strength to overcome any negative habit

Addictions in general have been called a disorder of the mind, body and spirit. Soul is superior to mind and body, so the spiritual renewal will have an overall effect on these three dimensions. Spiritual lift can control dependencies. Kurtz (1988) found that the higher the spiritual awareness of recovering alcoholics, the better their recovery from alcoholism.

According to Kevin Griffin, Addiction itself can be a misguided 'spiritual search'. Many people who don't see themselves as particularly spiritual when they get sober and they have some longing in them. And their addiction in one form or another has been a longing for connection. Here Spirituality related practices mend the gap in-between.

Many abstinent alcoholics continue to be dissatisfied with life and experience emotional and relational unmanageability. Since spiritual needs are usually not fulfilled in recovery, this may trigger a return to drinking. Hence including a spiritual component might enhance the recovery process.

As a result of spiritual practices, the predominance and relative order of the three gunas may easily be changed. All of the yogic practices were developed to create sattva in the mind and body. Thus, practicing spiritual practices and leading a yogic lifestyle strongly cultivates sattva. Sattva is the balance of Rajas and Tamas, combines the energy of Rajas with the stability of Tamas. So detachment will happen naturally. (Soham Hamsa)

After 18 years of research into the human brain, an Israeli scientist has found that there are millions of receptors in the human brain and they produce a chemical, which generate the same effect, similar to that of cannabis. It was indentified when a person goes through a certain level of stress or whatever, the body develops its own chemical ("Anandamide") to calm the system. But the time in between, encourages drug seeking behavior in most of the people. For them cultivation of little bit of Anandamide using the science of spirituality helps to remain calm, energetic, peaceful and blissful all the time, and no dependence on drugs can be achieved. (sadhguru)

Through some spiritual researches it was found that 40% of the reason behind addiction is due to a spiritual root cause. So root cause in the spiritual dimension can only effectively be overcome by spiritual remedies.

In retrospective studies, recovering addicts frequently reported spirituality as an important component of their recovering efforts and to be helpful in maintaining changes made during treatment (Flynn et al (1998)).

Because of alcoholism the spiritual needs are not being properly met, so there is always a feel of having a hole in the soul. Spiritual practices like Prayer, meditation, yoga, sat sung and chanting Holy Scriptures are the most fundamentals in the path of

spirituality and opting and adopting willing to one or more than of them will help to repair the damages occurred as a result of alcoholism. (Swami sivananda)

**Recommendations:**

Every tamilian is made well aware of the evils that TASMAL has brought into the individual, familial and social wellbeing. After a long and large protest in support with prohibition, the government has announced to close the selling units step by step but along with, a concern should also be given to the rehabilitation measures, unless the fate of an addict will go still miserable.

Spirituality oriented practices help to uncover the sheath, which blocks the spirit. Unless the spirit is brought into light, whether it may be recovery, rehabilitation, enhancement or enlightenment, nothing would be possible.

Rehabilitation centers should give equal importance to some spiritual orientation and related practices in order enable the individual to gain a proper insight in to meaning of human life and living.

**Conclusion:**

Alcoholism and spirituality never co-exist. They are of two different extremes, one pushes up the individual to a totally different world through extended consciousness, which helps him understand the unified world and to be a part of it but the later pulls down and isolates him from rest of all the good things in the world. Hence it can be concluded that 'Alcoholism destroys but spirituality builds'. So let us all pray to God, to bless everyone with the conscience to differentiate the thing.

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