

Who is a Spiritual Person?

By Fr. Anand Muttungal

Can we define a spiritual person? Many ask this question. Spirituality is a state of mind leading of a person to an ultimate reality; an inner path enabling to discover the essence of his/her being; or the deepest values and meanings by which one live. It can be developed through practicing meditation, prayer, contemplation etc. It leads a person to larger reality, yielding a more comprehensive self; with other individuals or the human community; with nature or the cosmos; or with the divine realm. It can encompass belief in immaterial realities or experiences of the immanent or transcendent nature of the world. After having gone through a world of explanations one must still confess that it is beyond one's understanding and religious traditions.

A few life examples might explain what I mean when I say that spirituality and spiritual person is beyond understanding. One day a comrade on his death bed called his closest friend and told him, "I think that my life in coming to end, you were with me in all my struggles to bring up my three daughters. My wife and I did everything to take care of them. My third daughter topped in graduation. You know, the other two are settled in far away places and this one will have no much support. I want you to try for her marriage." The friend said, "Don't worry my friend; I will start from now on." With a tearful eyes the Comrade said, "my wife is also not well, after a short silence he said, "Dear friend, I never shared this to anyone. In truth she is not my daughter but of the man who worked with my wife. I knew my wife loved me so much but a mistake, so I forgave her. I had promised her that the child will be my own. I continued to love her and the child." The friend looked at him with wonder. He continued saying, "Even if I die you must make sure that my third daughter is settled will."

I know many activists who may not be very frequent to worship places but they take notice of injustice done to people. They fearlessly speak for the suffering people. After reading news papers some of them ring up to say that we need to do something to alleviate the suffering of people from the minority community, the Dalits, the tribals etc. They fight all forms of fundamental groups including in their own communities. Besides these they mobilize people and resources to help people who are affected by natural calamities. In short their heart is wide open for the suffering humanity.

A doctor entered the hospital in hurry after being called in for an urgent surgery. He answered the call, changed his clothes and went directly to the surgery block. He found the boy's father going and coming in the hall waiting for the doctor. Once seeing him, the dad yelled: "Why did you take all this time

to come? Don't you know that my son's life is in danger? Don't you have the sense of responsibility?"

The doctor smiled and said, "I am sorry, I wasn't in the hospital and I came the fastest I could after receiving the call. And now, I wish you'd calm down so that I can do my work". "Calm down?! What if your son was in this room right now, would you calm down? If your own son dies now what will you do?" said the father angrily.

The surgery took some hours after which the doctor went out happily, "Thank God!, your son is saved!" And without waiting for the father's reply he went on his way running. "If you have any question, ask the nurse!!" "Why is he so arrogant? He couldn't wait some minutes so that I ask about my son's state" Commented the father when seeing the nurse minutes after the doctor left. The nurse answered, tears coming down her face: "His son died yesterday in a road accident, he was in the burial when we called him for your son's surgery. And now that he saved your son's life, he left running to finish his son's burial."

I tried to explain the meaning of spirituality through these examples but still I feel that it is difficult to exact the meaning. I can say with precision that spirituality is far above religious traditions. Though spirituality is beyond definition it exists whenever we struggle with the issues of how our lives can fit into the greater values of life. Our spirituality rise into new heights when we try to answer question, where does the universe comes from, why we are here, what happens when we die and the powers governing life. A spiritual person can be understood from every act that he/she performs with an extraordinary vision. It can be experienced in private life and in public life alike.