

WHEN A PSYCHIATRIST COMMITS SUICIDE

Recently a 40-year-old Psychiatrist committed suicide in Rajasthan and the social media was abuzz with statements like “When a psychiatrist can’t save himself”....etc. Protesting against this, a professional from the same field wrote on LinkedIn: “Mental health professionals are not superhuman. We don’t have endless reserves of emotional strength. We, too, cry. We, too, get overwhelmed. We, too, carry weight that no one sees.” It was a spirited defence and my full sympathy goes out to her and others like her. But the problem goes deeper.

Psychotherapists requiring therapy themselves; psychiatrists themselves unable to cope leading to such tragic situations.....these are all bound to happen so long as we remain bound by the Western paradigm of mental science that acknowledges nothing higher than the rational mind. Mind can never be "managed" at the level of the mind itself. That is why there is so much talk about "Trans-Personal psychology" even in the West now which looks beyond the mind and ego/self.

If we totally ignore the spiritual dimension in life and think that life situations can be managed only through medication and manipulating chemicals (as if consciousness is a function of chemicals) and counsel from a therapist who is himself a struggling human being.....then these events would recur. Only when we are able to view life and its situations from a higher perspective, i.e. from the spiritual viewpoint, shall things begin to fall in place. In the field of psychiatry, an iconic figure like Carl Jung realizing the inadequacies of the Freudian methodology delved deep into Vedanta, Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, Zen Buddhism and Taoism. Why? Because he realized

that ONLY mental approaches and analysis of the sub-conscious mind were not enough. As Sri Aurobindo had taught that the "lower can be explained only through the higher."

When Arjuna collapsed on the battlefield of Kurukshetra faced with an existential INTERNAL crisis, didn't Krishna act as the psychotherapist? Did he give some pills to pop? Was it a mental knowledge that Krishna gave to Arjuna? He gave the timeless spiritual knowledge of the Gita which even after centuries shows light to struggling human beings. In what way is the psychotherapy given by Krishna different from the Western psychiatric approaches? That is a question we have to ask. Then perhaps the mental-health professionals won't need to kill themselves.