

Tribute to Dr. J.K.Banerjee on the occasion of prayer meeting held on 17.02.2019



19.08.1938 to 02.02.2019

*When I am dead my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me,
Plant thou no roses on my head,
Nor shady cypress tree.*

*Be the green grass above me,
Dewy with Natures tear drops wet,
Haply may thou remember, haply may forget.*

- Christina Rossetti

There are some people who carved their name in hearts, not tombstones. Their legacy is etched into the minds of others. Dr. J.K.Banerjee, the founder of Rural Medicare Society, left us for heavenly abode on 2nd Feb, 2019. He left behind his legacy etched amongst his fellow colleagues, juniors and thousands of his patients and followers, innumerable rural surgeons across the country's length and breadth and abroad.

Every death is painful, more so for the nearest and dearest one. RMC was like a family to Dr. Banerjee. Losing Dr. Banerjee is like losing the head of the family, perhaps an irreparable loss. Therefore for obvious reason, RMC is morning and deeply saddened.

Great poet Kalidas said Death is *Prakriti* (primordial) and life is *bikriti* (Distortion). God Krishna during Kurukshetra war consoled Arjuna saying "*yataswa hi dhruvo mrtyur dhruvam janma mritasya ca tashmat apariharte Na tvam socitum arhasi*"

As we try to console ourselves remembering those valuable advices, we fondly remember Dr. Banerjee's his tremendous contribution in the field of health care to make it sustainable and affordable for the poorer section of the society.

Saint Kabir said, "*Aya hai so jaega, raja rank fakir; Koi sinhasan Chari chale, koi bandhe Jat janjir.*" Therefore each one of us has to go one day. But what really matters to judge the value of a person is how much a person had dedicated and sacrificed himself for others, how much he served for the betterment of poorer section of the society.

Being a staunch follower of Ramakrishna order he had strong believed in their great philosophy i.e. "Serving poor is serving God", (*Jeev gynae shiv seva*) and "*Atmanam Mokshartha, Jagat Hityachacha*". With that belief and objectives, he established the Rural Medicare Society. He had a vision and a mission. And to fulfill that, he worked relentlessly. His mission was to provide good basic medical and surgical care at an affordable cost in a humane manner at the doorstep of the rural population and peri-urban slums. Dr. Banerjee along with 6 of his friends established an organization at the national level and at international level in the name ARSI (1993) and IFRS (2005). It was a forum of surgeons working in rural areas of our country to serve the poor rural community. Again the objective was the same i.e. to make the surgical care available at the doorstep of the rural population thus help to minimize global surgical divide. His vision, hard work, and commitment made rural surgery movement a successful one and made it recognized as a specialty. He propagated his vision through many presentations in different scientific conferences.

He was strongly in favor for propagating the concept of human excellence, i.e. *being the best that we can be in every situation, doing the best what we can do in every endeavor*. He felt of an urgent need for evolution of human excellence in the arena of health and medical care (*Bahujana Hitaya Bahujana Sukhaya*) in today's world which at present is beyond the domains of structured university curricula for *Bahujana Hitaya Bahujana Sukhaya*.

What is mentioned here may be a tip of the iceberg of his qualities that he possessed but speaks all about his true compassion, care, and concern for the poorer section of the society.

When a great man dies, for years the light he leaves behind him lies on the paths of his followers. We all pray to almighty for peace of his soul. Our sincere condolences are for his bereaved family. May they find comfort and the strength to cope? Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti

- Dr.S.K.Basu