

# A Symposium on Meditation, Prayer and Spiritual Healing



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Editor-in-Chief

At the 2005 Kaiser Permanente National Primary Care Conference in Maui, I convened a distinguished panel, diverse in disciplines, to address the topic of meditation, prayer, and spiritual healing. The following symposium is an edited transcript of that session.

*Meditation* in the form of a relaxation response was first brought to conventional medicine by Herbert Benson, a Harvard cardiologist in the 1970s. *Prayer*? Isn't that something people do in church or on their knees by their bedside? *Spiritual*? Is that different from

religion? How is it experienced now? *Healing*? The only reference to healing when I went to medical school was wound healing. Can meditation, prayer, and spiritual healing be part of clinical practice? And what are the outcomes of their use?

This panel was brought together in Maui to illuminate the areas of mind, body, and spirit in clinical practice. We feel that this subject is so important that we are publishing it in this issue on health and healing. ❖

## Ode to Physicians

By Tom Janisse, MD

At day's end, who do I  
see in my patient's eyes  
as I look in to listen?  
Automated chart note?  
CPT 99214?  
or overbook five?

I view in her face  
Mrs Yinder's twitch,  
Mrs Olive's tear,  
Mr Sila's droop,  
Mr Garren's wink;  
all visit for care.  
Close air clouds our face.

A spot of blue! Ryan,  
blinks then winces, clutches  
his ear, his sole concern.  
I too am a parent,  
a child, and a patient.

Insight for me now  
at another day's end:  
Can that be enough to feel  
therefore I am?  
My schedule, my watch,  
my palm pilot don't  
hold my heart.

My heart holds  
my head in  
my hands.

What I give in visit  
after visit after  
visit all day long  
I take home.  
Ryan meets my son,  
Mrs Yinder greets my  
wife, Mr Sila calls  
my dad across  
the country.  
With these people  
at wit's end at home  
I feel fulfilled.

Is this Tuesday?  
Thursday?  
It's day's end.