Flash Back; Surgery, then and now

History of medicine dates back to origin of Humans, either by Creation or Evolution, whichever one believes in. Basically the primary medical needs of humans were related to just three; Relief from pain, healing of wounds and fixing of infirmities. Delivery and Child birth were considered as ‘Natural’, and not as medical need.

Modalities to support healing of wounds may be considered as the beginning of ‘Surgery’. These modalities included most primitive remedies drawn from nature, to time tested treatments prescribed by grandmas, to scientifically developed adjuncts and now to most recent advances like stem cell research and skin banks. Job of a surgeon is to ‘Surge-on’; and to manage all types of wounds, of all tissues, in all locations on the body, inflicted by external or internal and natural or iatrogenic agents. An ‘Operation’ is the most essential arena of surgical practice. Operation theatre is the only theatre where there are no prior rehearsals; and every case is an individual test of competence of surgeon.

I started my surgery training in 1959. More than half a century has passed since then. I have seen changes in surgical practice in developing countries like India and Gulf countries as well as in UK and USA. What I saw and performed, as a ‘General surgeon’ in the interiors of India can only be termed as ‘Handicap surgery’ by today’s standards. Moreover a general surgeon has to manage surgical problems from head to foot, since even the concept of ‘Specialists’ was beyond reach. In addition, surgical problems in tropical climates were quite different and were not usually part of any surgical training program.

For today's generation, it may not even be comprehensible to imagine performing surgery without disposables, clips and staples, endoscopes, haemostatic glues, hot, cold and ultrasonic knives and of course, lasers. Preoperative preparations and postoperative management were primitive, to say the least. ATLS was unheard of and Critical care had no standard protocol; it was left to individual judgment. In spite of all this, there is always a humorous side to surgical practice, and 'Surgeon's jokes' are well known. I may touch on some. It will be my pleasure to speak about Handicap surgery in a philosophical way as a flashback of my surgical experience.

Biography
Shyam Parashar completed his Masters in Surgery from Vikram University, India in 1962. He has fifty years of extensive experience as an active general surgeon and medical teacher. He is a recipient of awards in Goa as Best Clinical Teacher, 1973 and Doctor of the Year, 1975. In 1981, he joined King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia as professor of surgery and as Consultant Surgeon at King Fahd teaching hospital of the University. He has also held the addition appointments as Director, Internship training program and later as Director, post-graduate training program in surgery. After thirty three years, retired and recognized as Emeritus Professor. He played active role in establishing new colleges for Medicine, Nursing, and Pharmacy in the kingdom; and in developing undergraduate medical curriculum and postgraduate training programs; and constantly reviewing them. He has seventy scientific publications in Indian, Saudi and International Journals. He is an international editor for Journal of Medicine and Medical Sciences, and for Journal of Family and Community Medicine, of University of Dammam, Saudi Arabia. He is the recipient of many Awards like Hind Rattan Award, Bharat Gaurav Award, Medical Excellence Award and Life Time Achievement Award, Glory of India Gold Medal and Global Indian Achievers Award at Indo-British Friendship banquet in London. Has published two books on surgery by Scientific Publishing Group and are available on their website as E-Books, Surgery: the way I teach and Atlas of Surgery. He has also published three books on Philosophy; Twists and Turns of Destiny, Scattered Gems and Bikhre Moti.

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