

THE Hindu Message

A Weekly Review of Indian and World-Problems
from the Hindu Standpoint.

Medical Supplement

‘चिकित्सितात्पुण्यतमं न किञ्चिदपि शुश्रुमः’ । ‘विभेद्यल्पश्रुताद्रेदो मामयं प्रहरिष्यति’

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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Nellore people want to non-co-operate with the Government and at the same time they want the District and Taluk Boards to grant subsidies to the Ayurvedic dispensaries and send stipendiary students to the Madras Ayurvedic College and also to provide funds for the maintenance of the college. Have they lost their balance of mind? How is non-co-operation consistent with these prayers for stipends, subsidies and funds for the Local Boards which are quasi-government?

Another resolution of some interest has also been passed. The conference congratulates the Andhra Mandal for “holding separate Medical examinations in Telugu” and “also exhorts that the examinations of the All-India Ayurveda Vidyapitha should be conducted on a more extensive scale.” This is inconsistent on the face of it. When they hold separate medical examinations in Telugu why do they want the All-India Ayurveda Vidyapitha to hold their examinations “on a more extensive scale.” The Vidyapitha has been in existence for the last 12 years and it is four years since its head office came to Madras. During this period not a single student appeared for this examination from the Andhras to justify its being conducted on an extensive scale while nearly 350 candidates appear for it every year from all India. The number of students from Madras as a whole that came and passed these examinations could be counted in one’s fingers.

The Andhras in spite of it wanted a separate university and passed a resolution at the 3rd Andhra Ayurveda Sammelan to that effect and confirmed the same at the fourth session in the face of strong opposition, though that resolution was vetoed by the All-India Ayurveda Sammelan at the 11th session held at Indore in April 1920. They have been conducting separate examinations, it seems from the debate, during these two years, which is now being congratulated upon, by the District Conference. Why then do they require the All-India examinations also?

In fact there is no need for a separate body for the Andhras. For the All-India body has really made provisions, in holding of the examinations, for an efficient

students to write their answer papers in their vernaculars in the first grade *i.e.*, for the Bhashak. The Provincial body has only to move the All-India Body to make such arrangements as will best suit the province provided there is a demand for it in that province and the All-India body will surely make the necessary provisions therefor as required by the provincial body. This they never have done. But what they really want is a separate body.

We welcome the new journal “the Academy” at this hour of our transitional stage. Mr. T. Srinivasamurthi Iyengar of Tiruvendipuram, South Arcot, who is the editor of the Journal is an able doctor of the indigenous system and we can expect a good deal therefore from his pen in the matter of educating the public as well as our professional brethren in their respective duties towards the cause of Ayurveda. We wish success for the aims and objects of the Academy of Aryan Sciences whose official organ the Journal is. It deserves the support of all well-wishers and sympathisers of Ayurveda.

The question if doctors, quite as much as lawyers, ought not to be permitted to refuse to disclose their client’s secrets learnt in the course of professional attention, has been for some time past exercising medical minds in the west. It has been pointed out that public policy, which is pleaded in justification of protecting a lawyer, applies to the medical man with greater force. The law in this regard has surely to be put right. The difficulty arises or is likely to arise in connection with the evidence of doctors in criminal cases. The “Hospital” has some very sensible remarks on this subject. “There is very real difference between litigation between private citizens and proceedings in which the Crown, that is to say the State, in its corporate capacity is prosecutor. The public policy which the doctor invokes for his protection in the one case may well be invoked against him in the other. It is perhaps desirable to suspend final judgment on this aspect of the matter; and, indeed it is one which must be settled by public opinion in the last resort. It is not clear that public opinion would be prepared to allow crime to go unpunished for the sake of the Hippocratic oath: and doctors, who are practical men, will no doubt remember the homely proverb that half a loaf is better than none.”

The Bombay Vaidya Sammelan.

II

After the benediction and customary remarks of a prefatory nature, the venerable president read his presidential address in Sanskrit dealing with Ayurveda. His extreme old age only allowed him to read in a feeble voice and he had therefore to get the assistance of a young and promising Vaidya in reading the address aloud. The address was couched in simple and highly classical Sanskrit which is his favourite style. The learned president began by expressing his deep regret at the absolute neglect shown by the present-day Hindus for the study of Ayurveda, and began to dwell upon that excellence of Ayurveda which demands the respect of and careful preservation by the Vaidyas. It is admitted on all hands that the western system of medicine is at present in a flourishing condition. But the branch of Surgery has surpassed all expectations and progressed wonderfully. It will be a surprise to many to be told that even that branch of wonderful surgery of modern medicine is defective in certain respects. And is it not therefore high time that we should pause and take into our consideration the principles enunciated in the surgery of the East? The learned president considered that such a time has now come. One of the defects that exists in modern surgery is that it has not taken into consideration the particular root cause, culled from the various symptoms, of the various abscesses, but has prescribed only one sort of treatment in all their unripe stages. The result is that successful treatment of them becomes only a matter of accident, and not of the application of definite principles. The ancient Maharishis, on the other hand, owing to their unparalleled true insight into the causes of diseases backed by their extensive and marvellous experience have laid down, according to the nature of the *doshas* or root causes, the various stages of starving, expelling, drying, absorbing, opening, bandaging with poultices and other harmless processes of all abscesses. The success therefore will be the natural outcome of the treatment made. As regards the ripe stage of the abscesses, the western surgery is truly conversant with the *Sodhana* or antiseptic processes, but it is absolutely a stranger to the other processes of healing, restoring of the original colour and others which are clearly explained in the Ayurveda. It is therefore needless to say that as long as such defects exist in modern surgery it cannot be said to be a perfect system and if the votaries of Ayurveda will awake in time and get the necessary experience in the art by strenuous application the day will not be far when our beloved ancient system of medicine will once more emerge unscathed by the innumerable disabilities that have overpowered it and shine brilliantly in its ancient glory.

The learned President next dealt with certain important things to be learnt with regard to surgery and medicine according to Ayurveda. In surgery the ancient Rishis have dealt with methods of operation. Caution and the application of Kshara, a term which is translated by some as "alkalis"—but we very much doubt whether that term conveys the exact significance of Kshara. And in medicine the things to be learnt are the processes of applying "Vasti" which closely resembles the modern enema, but

not exactly the same, the application of irrigation of the bladder and the methods of introducing emetics and purgatives in a prescribed form. Of these surgical operations and the application of enema and other processes can be easily learnt from sympathetic medical men of the west, but the method of applying "Kshara" is a thing not known to the modern medical men even in these days. And even among the Vaidyas there are very few who know the process at all of this particular method. The cause is not far to seek. Owing to the many difficulties and disadvantages for the last ten centuries which need not be detailed here, the methods of ancient surgery and medicine gradually but slowly declined so much so that even the real import of many important tenets of the Maharishis dealing with the subject have nowadays been forgotten by many, and now there are only a very few among the Vaidyas who can make a faint approach to the traditions of the ancient medical men in their attempt to keep up the ancient knowledge without any fault. The result is that the art of applying Kshara had fallen into disuse and its revival seems, to many, to be quite a new thing. The learned president is one of those in whom that ancient knowledge and its art are reposed and it is to that knowledge of "Kshara application" he next devoted his attention in his address. "*It is well known to you all that Kshara is recommended in all cases of skin diseases especially leprosy, both white and black and other diseases as 'Sinus' 'Fistula in-ano' and similar ones. In most I have derived immense satisfaction by the Kshara method. It is known to you all that 'Jalini' which goes by the name of 'Carbuncle' which often affects diabetic patients is very difficult of cure and any amount of surgical operations carefully conducted has not, in a large majority of cases, given the desired result. I am glad to tell you that this Kshara has given marvellous results in such cases as 'Jalini'. You all know that that kind of 'Dushta Vrana' called 'Cancer' in western medical science is impossible of cure. Even there our application of 'Kshara' has given very good results beyond expectation. Even cases as Sinus and Fistula-in-ano where the application of surgery is recommended in our Sastras the application of Kshara has given the desired result without the least trouble. Above all when there is profuse bleeding as a result of difficult operation or as a result of accidental cutting of an artery or in fresh wounds, the remedy which a medical man should seek as a last resort is this 'Kshara' application and none else.*" The learned president dwelt on many other diseases in which the application of Kshara has been found by him to be of immense use. Not only that; but of all the surgical appliances. The president has made a special study of the subject of this Anusutra or "Kshara" so thoroughly that he was able to make improvements on the ancient method and to have introduced certain novel procedures, of applying this Kshara in certain diseases, which are entirely his own inventions. We shall give only one example of his peculiar method so that it may serve as an eye-opener to many and make them reflect that the ancient system is not incapable of any improvement in the right direction, is not, in fact, a stagnant one, but an ocean giving to its votaries whatever they desire, according to their ability and power of application. We have already remarked that our president has written a commen-

tary, called "Bhashya" on the "Susruta Samhita" which can hold its place beside the classical works of Bhattara Harichandra Jajjeta Gayadasa and Chakrapani. When dealing with the treatment of hydrocele of a Kapha type he has remarked in his commentary that though an operation is recommended the application of "Kshara" is most harmless and highly effective too. And for the edification of the Vaidyas he gave out, in his address, the special procedure he has adopted. Says he:—"The preparation of Kshara is difficult and tedious and has been hidden for a long time. We shall therefore explain it at some length. First if the hydrocele is in one side or if it is on both sides, the affected part or parts should be rubbed of the size of the tip of the little finger, with some rough leaves of trees like "Kakodumbara" or the part may be slightly incised with a knife and Kshara should be applied for two or three days. When the part has lost its sensitiveness owing to the Kshara a small iron rod like the "Hamsapaksha Nadi" with a blunt edge should be applied over the part and turned round and round like a screw till the patient feels no pain or blood does not gush out. When pain is felt or blood comes out Kshara must again be applied and the small tube of "Kachchi" leaves should be introduced and covered over with Kachchi leaves and bandaged. This process should be daily applied till the water inside does not forcibly get out owing to the rupture of the interior membrane. When water comes out the thin tube of Kachchi should be introduced as before and bandaged with the leaves of jayanti called "munnai" in Tamil prepared in the following manner. A shallow iron dish should be placed over fire and when it becomes red hot the leaves of jayanti should be put into it one inch thick throughout and should be rubbed with hand covered with thick cloth. When it becomes a paste like the "Roti" or Indian wheat bread it should be placed in a plantain leaf and applied over the part and carefully bandaged. The bandage should be removed every two or three days until relief is obtained. Secondary ailments arising out of this procedure may be treated accordingly." Surely this process is far superior, and comparatively harmless, to the chloroform operation of modern days. Even in abdominal tumours when they are of a kapha type and only skin deep the application of external 'Kshara' which is not mentioned in the Sastras, in preference to the application of the internal kshara recommended in the sastras, has been done with ready results. For says he:—"Although this method is not expressly found in the sastras I am able to recommend this on account of the practical experience gained by its application. The sastras say that whatever is found useful should be applied. First the exact position of the tumour and its size should be ascertained and its centre fixed. Then with the aid of "Vreeshimukha" or 'Teocar' a hole should be created in such a manner that a portion of the tumour also is pierced. The Kshara should be applied through the hole and the mouth of the wound should be smeared with honey and ghee and bandaged according to the general method. The tumour will be eaten away by the "kshara." It will then disappear. If owing to abnormal flesh growth the tumour is turned by the 'kshara' into an abscess the abdomen should be opened according to the prescribed form and the abscess treated accordingly." In

this way the learned president dwelt at great length on the importance and the application of kshara. As regards the major surgery the president mentioned an incident which is worth recording here. Many there cannot be who have not heard of that surgical expert, Sri Sureshprasad Sarvadhikari, commonly known as S. P. Sarvadhikari. On one occasion while going over the treatment section of "Susruta Samhita" with the commentary of this "Bhashya" the late Mr. Sarvadhikari expressed surprise, in connection with a well known Susruta passage in the 2nd chapter of Chikitsa beginning with "अभिन्नमन्त्रम्" that such a clear and clever process is not known even to the highly developed modern surgery of the west. Says our president:—We know nothing of modern surgery, but this is what the late Sarvadhikari expressed and experts in western surgery alone could testify to the truth or otherwise of what Mr. Sarvadhikari said. The learned president closed his address with a pathetic appeal, to the Indian public in general and indigenous Vaidyas in particular, that Ayurveda should not still be neglected and allowed to share the fate of our other ancient sciences and industries. It is now no use dilating upon the various causes that led to our present ridiculous position. We should take courage and to strive to restore our ancient system of medicine to its ancient spotless glory. The address was brought to a close with the thoughtful recitation of the ancient poet Sri 'Vyasa' "विमलश्रुतादेरे नामयं प्रदृष्यति" which means, "The Veda trembles that the ill-educated will rob it of its contents." In other words every one of us should strive to get a clear knowledge of the sastras which alone will save our ancient lore. Need we say that we are in entire agreement with this noble message.

K. G. NATESA SASTRI, M. R. A. S.

Committee On Indigenous Medicine.

The Committee on the Indigenous systems of Medicine, appointed by the Government of Madras have drawn up the following Questionnaire:—

1. What is the division or division of the indigenous systems of medicine—Ayurveda, Unani or Siddha—that you propose to deal with?

2. (a) What are the theory or theories of causation of disease according to your system?

Please favor the Committee with your views as to how far your theory or theories stand the tests of modern scientific criticism.

(b) What are the principles and methods of diagnosis and treatment followed in your system?

Please favor the committee with your views as to the general efficacy of treatment adopted in your system, supporting your statements by facts and figures wherever possible.

(c) Do you hold the view that indigenous systems of treatment are more efficacious in certain conditions than other systems? If you do, please adduce evidence in support of your statement.

3. (a) Are you connected directly with any institution, providing medical relief or medical education, on indigenous lines?

(b) Do you consider that the existing institutions of indigenous systems are satisfactory from the standpoint of

(1) adequacy of medical relief provided;

(2) suitability as centres of medical education.

If your answer is in the negative, please state in what respects you consider the existing arrangements deficient and how you propose to remedy them.

(c) Do you consider that there exists at present sufficient provision for medical relief and medical education on indigenous lines? If your answer is in the negative, please state what measures you would propose to remedy the insufficiency?

4. (a) Do you consider that the ideal medical training of indigenous systems of medicine requires

(1) that the students should be placed under the personal guidance of teachers of first rate ability and of recognised standing in their subjects;

(2) that the teachers and students alike should have access to well-appointed hospitals, laboratories, libraries and museums;

(3) that the teachers should have sufficient leisure to be able to pursue independent investigations in their own subjects?

If you share in this view as to the essentials of medical training, do you consider that this ideal is attained or attainable in the near future in any institution in this Presidency or elsewhere, where there is provision for medical training on indigenous lines?

(b) If you consider that this ideal is too high for the present, what would you substitute in its stead, as

(1) the ideal to be ultimately achieved

(2) the idea to be worked out in the immediate present.

5. Do you agree with the view of the Calcutta University Commission that "There is an obvious and promising desire at the present moment among the numerous adherents of these (indigenous) systems for closer touch with modern scientific methods. In time, no doubt they will be able to make available for the practitioners of western medicine the traditional knowledge which is of real value and will reject, as western medicine continually rejects, those theories which are mere survivals, and cannot stand the test of experiments. The distinction between Indian and western 'systems' of medicine will then disappear."

If you agree that a unified system of medicine as indicated in the above passage is the ideal to be aimed at, what steps would you suggest for the fulfillment of such an ideal?

6. Do you agree with the view that the curriculum of studies of indigenous medicine should include a study of modern scientific methods as illustrated by such subjects of study as modern physics, chemistry, and biology, as also a study on modern lines of anatomy, physiology, pathology, bacteriology, and surgery in all its branches?

If you agree with the above view, in whole or in part, please favour the committee with a precis of the course of studies you would propose for students of indigenous medicine, with special reference to

(a) the progressive standards you would propose, that is to say, standards corresponding, for example, to the existing allopathic qualifications of Licentiate (L. M. P. of our allopathic Medical Schools), Graduate, Masterate and Doctorate (L.M.S., M.B., M.S., M. D., of our Universities).

(b) The preliminary qualifications and periods of study for each of the standards proposed.

(c) The medium or media of instruction proposed.

7. What are your views on the question of extending Medical Registration to Indigenous Systems of Medicine? If you hold that such extension is necessary or desirable, please favour the Committee with your views regarding

(a) the formation of a suitable Registration Board for admitting competent practitioners into the medical register,

(b) any changes in, or additions to, the existing legislation on Medical Registration.

8. What is your opinion regarding the compara-

tive cost of treatment, according to allopathic and indigenous systems? Please give reasons for your opinion.

9. What, in your opinion, are the causes of decay of the indigenous systems of medicine? Kindly favour the committee with your suggestions for revival?

10. Please state your views as to how the indigenous systems of medicine can be fostered and promoted by

(a) the State,

(b) the local boards,

(c) the Universities,

(d) Private agencies (individuals or associations.)

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Prepared by Pandit C. T. ARUMUGAM PILLAY, Ayurvedic Doctor, and the member of the Committee on the indigenous systems of medicine (the Ayurvedic and

Unani) and son of

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