

# THE Hindu Message

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

## Medical Supplement

‘चिकित्सिताप्युपयतमं न किञ्चिदपि शुश्रुमः’ । ‘विभेद्यल्पश्रुताद्रेदो मामयं प्रहरिष्याति’

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### NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The indigenous systems of medicine have high antiquity and great value. The Hindu Science of Ayurveda goes far back into the dim distant past, even as early as the third century B. C., and their earliest medical authorities belonged to the Sutra period of the Yajur Veda. With the Hindus Ayurveda is not merely a medical science but a sacred lore as it is treated as an Upa Veda or supplementary revelation.

The materia medica of the Hindus includes quite a vast collection of herbs and drugs, belonging to the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms; many of these herbs and drugs are copied in the British Pharmacopoeia under only different names.

Nor were the Hindus ignorant of surgery. Ancient Hindu physicians are said to have performed bold and skilful operations. Limbs were successfully amputated, and the bleeding was quickly arrested by applying pressure to the affected parts. Operations were performed in the abdomen and uterus. Such diseases as hernia, fistula and piles were cured through operation. Dislocated joints or bones as well as broken bones were cleverly set together. Besides, substances were skilfully extracted from the body. Wherever possible, they used fine instruments. Students were trained to operate on wax models or on the tissues and cells of the vegetable kingdom, and on dead animals.

During the Budhistic period the Hindu science of medicine seemed to have attained its zenith, especially through State aid. The Science was studied in the chief centres of Budhistic learning, particularly in the great monastic University of Nalanda, near Gaya. Public hospitals were founded in every important City, and these proved real schools of medical learning, as cases were closely studied and kept under continuous observation and examination. With the decline of Budhism, public Hospitals gradually disappeared and the Science of Hindu medicine fell into the hands of a lower caste. With the revival of Brahmanas in a new garb over-scrupulous brahmins came to avoid all contact with blood or morbid matter. Hence the practice of medicine came into the hands of a caste known as Vaidyas. Owing to the subsequent dynastic

changes and foreign invasion into the country the Ayurvedic system came to be neglected, and handled by village quacks.

From the earliest history of man, baths of hot sand have been used to relieve bone and joint disease especially gout and rheumatism. Faber and Plum tabulate the findings during the and after the sand bath in a number of cases as regards pulse, respiration, temperature at different points of the body, and the blood pressure, urine and changes in weight, as well as the effect on the pathologic condition. Their conclusions are to the effect that the hot sand bath seems to combine with the benefit from the heat—reducing pain and stimulating local circulation—a direct action on the muscles from the weight of the sand. This relaxes the muscle and tends to break up the vicious circle of pain and muscle contraction. This relaxing effect on the muscles from the sheer weight of the sand has been overlooked before, they think, but they regard it as an important factor in the effect, promoting resorption as well as combating the possibly unsuspected hypertonia in the muscles. Another advantage of sand baths is that they can be graduated with precision to fit conditions in the weakest. The only contraindications are febrile diseases, valvular defects, great instability of the circulation and possibly anemia and asthenia.

Davison cites the case of a man, aged 41, who had asthma for twenty-two years. For several years attacks occurred in the spring and fall only and lasted from seven to fourteen days. These attacks gradually increased in severity and frequency till wheezing was present practically the entire year and the acute attacks occurred during all seasons. Cutaneous tests were made with protein extracts from all the different foods the patient ate throughout the entire year and all were negative. The extract from dog hair gave a strongly positive reaction. Further questioning of the patient brought out the fact that the attacks of asthma occurring in the spring and fall had usually been after hunting trips and that his dog now slept on the steps of his sleeping porch just by the patient's bed. The dog was sent away and attacks ceased at once. To give this diagnosis a rational test, a lapse of two weeks was allowed. At the end of two weeks, a neighbor's dog was borrowed and the patient played with it for five minutes. Fifteen minutes later a severe attack of asthma began.



## The Sun Cure.

### THERAPEUTIC VALUE OF EXPOSURE.

Sir Henry Gauvain, the writer of the following article which we reprint from the London "Times," is the Medical Superintendent of Lord Mavor Treloar Cripples' Hospital and College, Alton and Hayling Island, Hants and Consultant in Surgical Tuberculosis to the London Essex and Hampshire County Councils.

The Sun is a great dispeller of ill-humours. He is the healer, the life-bringer. He is the only true doctor to the troubled mind. He is the best apothecary in the world. There is no tonic sold for gold over any chemist's counter so remedial as that celestial pick-me-up which is poured for nothing at daybreak over the wide counter which is the rim of Earth.—(Norman Davey)

The truth of this quotation is confirmed by the Medical Correspondent of the "Times," who, on April 18, 1922, reported that the death-rate for England and Wales in 1921—one of the sunniest years we ever experienced—was the lowest on record (12.1 per 1000 population). "The sun in fact is the world's antiseptic."

The coal strike last year, with its resulting improvement in the atmosphere of our cities, followed by the joys of a wonderful summer, drew public attention, as nothing previously did, to the value of sunlight. Reports of wonderful cures of tuberculous children exposed to the sun's healing rays; Dr. Saleeby's vigorous campaign against the "diseases of darkness," and his plea for pure air and more sun; Professor Leonard Hill's well-known work on the therapeutic value of fresh air; the labours of the Smoke abatement Committee; and the appointment of a Committee to investigate the effect of sunlight on the body in health and disease, are amongst factors which have added further to the general interest in the matter.

It is strange that, while for ages we have instinctively recognised the value of sunshine and revelled in its genial radiance, so little has been done to study seriously its effects and to utilise sunlight intensively, thus securing its maximum benefits. And, yet no sane man would willingly select a sunless in preference to a sunny climate. We fly to sea and sun whenever the exigencies of our occupations permit, and in increasing numbers those happy mortals blessed with opportunity imitate the swallows, and escape to summer climes at the approach of winter.

### THE GREATEST TONIC.

Absence of sunlight has a depressing, devitalising effect, evidenced alike in the mental and physical condition of those deprived of its influence. Death stalks through the land in the dreary days of winter. The darkest hour precedes the dawn. It is at that time our vitality is at its lowest, and death so often conquers life.

Sunlight stimulates and enlivens; it is of help in almost all conditions. It is the greatest of all natural tonics—like good champagne, invigorates and exhilarates; indulged in to excess it intoxicates and poisons. In suitably graduated doses, which vary greatly in individual cases cumulative and favourable effects are produced which are not accompanied by those unfortunate "sequelae" associated with many drugs. Sunlight and fresh air are such valuable therapeutic agents that the extravagant claims made by enthusiasts are not only wholly unnecessary, but actually may defeat

their object. Statements such as "the sun will cure all forms of surgical tuberculosis," are exaggerations, are contrary to fact, and if persisted in, will tend to bring into disrepute a method of treatment of the highest value, but possessing definite limitations.

In suitably selected cases, graduated and skilled exposure to sunlight aids and accelerates the cure of surgical tuberculosis, both by the beneficial local reaction it produces and by its effect on the general well-being. So also will many other conditions respond, and it is for the general recognition and wide application of this potent natural therapy that I plead.

To the majority of men acquainted with the stuffy, unwholesome wards of the stereo-typed town hospital, the sight of recumbent children suffering from active tuberculous disease with acute lesions, with abscesses and sinuses, with paraplegia and severe deformity, playing and working in a perfectly natural manner in the open air; and of ambulant patients bathing, paddling, gathering wild flowers and looking robust and healthy, is not only unorthodox but even incongruous. Such patients, in city hospitals, are usually pale, anaemic, cachectic, often querulous or apathetic, have wasted limbs, dull eyes, expressionless faces.

At Alton and Hayling, save for bathing drawers and essential orthopaedic appliances, they lie nude and brown, bright-eyed and laughing, alert and vigorous, with rounded muscular limbs. It may be an outrage to tradition, but it is nevertheless a fact that a dingy, ill-ventilated hospital ward is no necessarily the best place for the chronically sick and that sun, fresh air, and pure sea water have therapeutic value. Colds are never contracted unless introduced by some infected visitor, and even then the resistance is so raised, that they are almost unknown.

This is so opposed to preconceived notions that such truths are only slowly digested; the lesson needs learning. These aids to cure need gradual application and meticulous care. The tender skins of delicate children should not be suddenly exposed to sun and air. The head of the patient must always be protected, and by slow degress the skin gradually bared. The cachectic product of an unnatural civilisation needs careful handling.

### LATENT SURPLUS POWER.

Presumably clothing was first adopted for ornament, later to conserve heat, to save our own bodies from the effort of generating additional heat. But the very effort to generate intrinsic heat, to promote oxygenation and tissue change, if carefully evoked in suitable subjects, is wholly beneficial. In the very young or old, in the very feeble or debilitated this increased metabolic activity cannot be safely elicited. For these real open-air exposure is physically impossible, and should be attempted only rarely and very cautiously. In the majority of cases, however, there is latent surplus power waiting to be utilised, and as it is gradually evoked, so the general condition of the patient improves, more energy in the form of heat becomes available, a beneficent circle is established, metabolic activity increases, the appetite improves, there is greater resistance to infection, greater ability to overcome infection present, toxins are more readily eliminated and, with the resulting improvement in general health, so there is diminution and final eradication of the disease.



The patient is first acclimatised. Gradually the clothing is removed, and the feet and, later the whole body are at length exposed for slowly increasing periods to the genial warmth of the sun and tonic effect of the cold pure air. Great precautions must be observed. The patient must never be too hot or too cold, he must never shiver. His skin must never blister. While under treatment, the normal course of existence should not be interfered with.

Thus, exposed patients at the Trelour Cripple Hospitals at Alton and Hayling Island are otherwise treated exactly as if they were in the wards. They have their lessons, enjoy their meals, play, and receive the necessary nursing attention while in the sunlight. Insolation to the point of inducing discomfort, lassitude, or fatigue is avoided. An invigorating reaction is aimed at, which has a tonic and stimulating effect, is accompanied by a sense of well-being, and is acquired without effort or concentration. Then, indeed, the beneficial effects of insolation are most marked and well recognised by both patient and physician.

The variability of reaction of different individuals is extreme. Those whose skins bronze best are the most suitable subjects for helio and aerotherapy. Pigment induced by exposure has a protective "rele," and the sun-browned child, clad in pigment he has produced himself is able to withstand extremes of heat and cold much better than his pale-skinned fellow. Equal exposure to the same source of light in varying patients has very varying effects. Some pigment well, others indifferently, and others again seem almost devoid of pigmenting power. As a rule the patient who pigments well has a better resisting power to tuberculous infection, and is better able to overcome the disease, if contracted, than the non-pigmenter. Pigmenting power, therefore becomes of prognostic significance, as well as practical therapeutic value.

#### MIND AND SUN.

I may not pause to describe further other important indirect effects of skilled insolation—its action on the circulation, how it enriches the blood and cures certain anæmia, its effect on respiration, absorption, and excretion. Its effects are at times paradoxical—the wasted become well-nourished—but it is a wonderful cure for obesity. There follows a sense of lightness, well-being, exhilaration. The mind responds to the sun's genial influence, and provided stimulation is not pressed to excess, the body acquires greater working capacity. There is a striking generalised improvement. One has the impression of a stimulus being applied to and a better response obtained from the patient.

On superficial cutaneous lesions the direct action is evident and more easily explained. Ulcers heal, discharging wounds at first discharge more, but the secretion is more serous and less purulent. They close, leaving healthy supple scars. The result is largely due to the indirect bactericidal action of the light, aided by the suitable inflammatory response carefully graduated insolation provokes.

I have indicated sufficiently the benefits, I plead for their more general enjoyment. We owe much to Rollier, who by his insistent advocacy and the excellent results of his methods, did much to popularise this form of treatment in surgical tuberculosis. But let me again contradict the impression that it will cure this disease. Skillfully applied, and

in suitable cases, it is of the highest value as an aid to and an accelerator of cure. It is equally useful in many other conditions, the weakly anæmic, rickety child, the convalescent and many others are fit subjects for this aid.

Hospitals and infirmaries for chronic diseases might often be advantageously removed from towns to situations where helio-therapy could be practised. The up-to-date hospital of the future may be compelled to use this aid to cure. Helio-therapy should be of great benefit in our fever hospitals during the summer months, and of great benefit in our fever hospitals during convalescence of the patients. Even more is it needed in preventive medicine. The child educated to enjoy the sun, fresh air, and sea (but that is another story), sensibly and intensively, will be a very different object from the miserable creature who so often haunts our cities today. There should be a great future for its rational employment in open-air and other schools.

The Dawlight Saving Act increases our opportunity, and I trust that in the interests of public health this coming summer's sun will be rationally employed and enjoyed as sunshine has never been before.

### Parenthood.

#### UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN.

The National Birthrate Commission met at the Commission Room, Rhonda House, in nail week under the presidency of Principal A. E. Garvis, when Dr. Crichton Miller gave evidence on the care of adolescence. In the course of his evidence he said parenthood that was worthy of the name was a matter of idealism. The failure of the parent who had high ideals and good intentions to inspire his children with idealism was a sufficiently pressing problem. There were certain recurrent types of parental failure along these lines:

(a) The over-solicitous parent sought to away all difficulties from the child's path, and to protect him from conflict of any kind. The result was that the privileges of childhood became too precious to be abandoned; the ideal of growth and maturity had no chance to attract, and the boy or girl refused to grow up. This Peter Pan motif was common in so-called upper society.

(b) The over-protective parent was so perfectly capable and efficient that the child developed a permanent sense of inferiority which stood in the way of his self-realisation.

(c) The over-attentive parent made the child aware of being a constant centre of the interest. Everything that it said or did produced some notable reaction of praise, blame, anxiety, or amusement. The result was that the child learnt to measure the effect of his actions in terms of the sensation that they created rather than in terms of achievement—the normal way of growth. Sensation and achievement were alternatives, and the choice between them was of the most far-reaching importance.

#### THE CENTRE OF THE QUESTION

At the centre of the question of development lay authority; the adult side of the factor of suggestibility in the child. Authority he used to obtain immediate results in good behaviour; but there were parents who were so well satisfied with having well-behaved children that they never went



on to inquire whether there was any living aspiration or ideal behind the child's conduct nor whether obedience had been purchased at too high a price. The misuse of authority was responsible for producing two common social types, neither of which was able to react quite normally to life. These were the rebel who defied public opinion and must always be a heretic at all costs, and the ultra suggestible who was unable to resist the influence of the majority and found safety only in orthodoxy. Finally, the misuse of authority was seen in religious training which often defeated its own end by presenting the ideal to the child or the adolescent as inseparable from some form which he could not reject. In analysing the break-downs of after-life it was found again and again that the question of authority was of critical importance to the history of the individuals' development and in his present problem. Many parents were ready to delegate their responsibilities to teachers and others. While this might be fortunate in certain cases, it was wrong in principle, and indicated the low value that was set on the opportunities of parentage.

Finally as an immensely important factor in the whole psychology of parenthood, there was the spirit of patronage. It was deeply rooted in the biological tendency of the adult to fear the independence of the young and their rivalry in the field of life. It was often the unconscious motive underlying treatment that bore all the marks of solicitude and devotion. It was one of the causes of our reluctance to give our children any form of sex instruction! we would prefer that they should remain immature unknowing, and that we should still be able to feel that there was a gulf of knowledge and experience fixed between us and them. Thus we tried to pass on to them ethical ideals or a system of religion which had a water-tight bolt-head between it and the biggest biological force of life—sex.

There are two ways in particular in which adult patronage was apt to hinder development in the case of the girl. One was the part of the mother who represented to her daughter the painful and self-sacrificing side of role of motherhood in order to impress her with all that had been done for her. The girl carried this fear away, and might never overcome it. The other was the part of the father who was ready to make everything easy for his daughter's marriage, but had himself shown her such an example of the domestic bully that the girl had decided that marriage was not good enough. The same spirit of patronage was often seen in the pressure that was brought to bear on boys to adopt the family profession. And patronage extended also to the spiritual sphere where it appeared as the readiness to accept a limited objective and a fixed ideal which was to be accepted by the new generation because it was good enough for the one that was passing. It was a denial of the principle of evolution, and it was bound to defeat its own ends. The religious idealism of many parents abode alone because they were not prepared to see it fall into the ground and die before it could bear fruit.

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