

A LIFE SKETCH OF DR. DIWAN JAI CHAND

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"Dr. Diwan Jai Chand is Homœopathy and Homœopathy is Dr. Diwan Jai Chand. Go and meet him". This is what a young Homœopath was told when he was going to visit Lahore in the thirties. This Dr. Diwan Jai Chand, whose name has been a byword for Homœopathy and who is held as the father of Homœopathy in Northern India, passed away on the 14th of May, 1961 mourned not only by his family and friends, but by the entire Homœopathic fraternity and by the tens of thousands that derived benefit from his treatment.

Born on 3rd July, 1887 at Rahim Yar Khan in Bahawalpur State (now in West Pakistan) he had his education upto High School there. He passed his Intermediate from D. A. V. College, Lahore. One of his subjects was Philosophy. This helped him later in life to critically examine the soundness of Hahnemann's principles of Homœopathy. He had his initial medical education at the K. E. Medical College, Lahore. He left for U.K. in 1910 and returned in 1913 after passing L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S. (Edin.); L.R.F.P. & S. (Glas.); D.P.H. (Edin.); D.T.M. (L'Pool); L.M. (Dub.) and doing an apprenticeship in Bacteriology and Public Health work. He had a brilliant academic career and was a scholarship holder all through. During his stay at the K. E. Medical College, Lahore, he was the first recipient of the Beli Ram Lamont Medal in Anatomy and secured certificates of honour in Medicine and Ophthalmic Surgery besides some other subjects. He passed with great distinction all his examinations in the Medical College, Lahore, as also in U.K. and Ireland.

His memory was so remarkable that he could reproduce pages verbatim and give references of pages from memory. This prodigal memory was his great asset right till the end. As a matter of fact during the last two years of his life when his sight was gradually failing, and he could not read much, his

memory got even more acute and he could always guide other doctors where to look for a particular information and in which part of the page.

His great reverence for his teachers was of the classical type. After acquiring all these qualifications he was going to take Examination for the coveted Indian Medical Service and had sent in his application and completed all formalities when per-chance he met his professor in the street. On learning of his plans the professor told him, "Dr. Jai Chand I am shocked. A person of austere habits like you, who is a vegetarian, a teetotaler and of such rare brilliance and diligence should not rot his life in the I.M.S. Instead I can offer you a research post in Bacteriology & Public Health and would consider it a privilege if you work with me or else I can have you sent for such work to British Africa. That would be more becoming for your talents". On receiving this advice he immediately gave up the idea of joining Indian Medical Service and returned his rail ticket. However, he declined the rare honour of offer of research post there because of family considerations and decided to return to his motherland.

On return from U.K. he joined service with the Punjab Government as Deputy Sanitary Commissioner in the Public Health Department. He was one of the first Indians to be appointed to that high post. He resigned soon after due to his independent nature and nationalist political leanings. He then started his Clinic at Lahore in 1915. He was the Secretary of Lahore Medical Union (Allopathic body), the precursor of the Punjab Branch of Indian Medical Association.

His introduction and conversion to Homœopathy was just an accident, for initially in common with his Allopathic colleagues he was very bigoted and a denouncer of Homœopathy, of which, ofcourse, he knew nothing. It was in the cause of national political movement that he came reluctantly to teach Midwifery and Gynæcology at a Homœopathic College. A casual perusal of some books at the college library in the few spare moments before his lecture. interested him in the science. A further study convinced him of the scientific nature of Homœopathy and the clinical trials were very gratifying, some-

times bordering on magical. Once he was thoroughly convinced he decided to practice this system ridiculed by his colleagues. All the medicines in his dispensary he threw into a gutter near his clinic rather than sell them to somebody. When questioned about it he said, "I cannot sell poison, what is not good for my patients is not good for other doctors' patients also". People called him mad and he had to suffer ridicule and financial and social privations because till then no qualified doctor had taken to the practice of Homœopathy in Northern India. But he stood steadfast in his belief and when he started to cure those declared incurable by the Allopaths he regained public esteem and gradually his fame spread far and wide.

As a physician he was remarkable and such was the efficacy of the treatment administered by him that he dominated the profession for three decades in the prepartition Punjab and later in Delhi and came to be known as "a great healer", "a miracle man", and "a Messiah" who could revive those that are nearly dead.

He made himself available to all sections of society and his very extensive practice ranged from the humblest to the highest in the land.

For some time he was the President of the Punjab Homœopathic League at Lahore. He was the founder and Principal of National Homœopathic College in Lahore in the early twenties but had to close it down after some years for want of enough trained personnel to man it. After independence of the country in 1947, he had to shift to Delhi as a refugee from West Pakistan and establish his Clinic in New Delhi. He was President of the All India Institute of Homœopathy, Delhi Branch, for some years. Later he mostly remained aloof from different associations so as to effectively mediate and bring about unity. He enjoyed the confidence of all sections and was ever ready to espouse and help the Homœopathic cause in whichever quarter his help was needed.

At Lahore for 30 years till the time of partition he conducted a pharmacy, the National Homœopathic Pharmacy, to be able to provide books, genuine medicines and other sundries to the numerous people he converted to Homœopathy in Punjab

as with him propagation of Homœopathy became a life mission. He also founded and edited an excellent journal, *Health and Homœopathy*. For paucity of enough material of the requisite standard it became almost a single handed effort and so had to be discontinued after some time.

He served on the Punjab Homœopathic Enquiry Committee before partition of the country. In 1946, he led a deputation to the Health Minister in the Interim National Government and his sound arguments and enthusiastic approach made a very favourable impression and the deputation was promised that steps would be taken to recognise Homœopathy. In 1948, he was appointed a Member of the Homœopathic Enquiry Committee and he put in lot of labour in producing convincing material for the Allopath Members of the Committee and for final incorporation in the report and making it favourable to Homœopathy. In 1952, he was appointed a Member of the Indigenous and Homœopathic Systems of Medicine Committee of the Planning Commission. The recommendations of this Commission with regard to these systems of medicine were incorporated in the first Five Year Plan. In 1952, he was also appointed a Member of the Ad Hoc Committee on Homœopathy. In 1956, this was changed to the Homœopathic Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Health, Government of India, and he continued to be a Member there till his death, taking an active part in its deliberations and always trying to establish Homœopathy on a firm footing and securing for it equal status with Allopathy. He also served on the Research and Technical Sub-Committee of the Homœopathic Advisory Committee. In 1956, he was again a member of the Indigenous and Homœopathic Systems Committee of the Planning Commission. Besides that he had the distinction of being the only Homœopath appointed to the Health Programmes Panel of the Planning Commission. He was thus a member of every committee on Homœopathy and a senior guide.

He was an entirely self made man. To go abroad for studies he raised the money by selling his wife's jewellery and raising loans. He was sincere, honest and truthful to the core and he always maintained that honesty and truth increases life by

keeping a person at peace with his conscience and thus fearless in facing the world.

A non-professional activity of note was the tremendous labour Dr. Jai Chand put in as the Chairman of Peoples Bank of Northern India Ltd., to try and save this premier bank of the Punjab from going into liquidation and thus save from ruin countless families. It is highly creditable that it was all a labour of love as his work, done at great professional and personal sacrifices, was all honorary though it could have fetched him many lacs of rupees. Seeing his banking abilities and sincerity in work he was offered a post in another bank which carried a salary double his income. He rejected it outright without a second thought with the remark "the pleasure I get in curing the sick and suffering people cannot be compensated by any amount of money".

He was a philanthropist and particularly for the cause of Homœopathy he always opened his purse wide. At Lahore he contributed to a Homœopathic Association Rs. 150/- per month to run a Homœopathic Charitable Dispensary. After the partition of Punjab, inspite of the heavy losses sustained in that political holocaust, he made a provision of Rs. 40,000 for a Homœopathic Hospital, even though it was difficult for him to spare that sum. Out of this he made a handsome contribution towards the construction of a Hospital by the Roshan Lal Trust Society at Meerut (U.P.). He had been the Chairman of this Trust for nearly 30 years. He was a publicity-shy man and never publicised what he considered to be meagre contributions. He used to say that "My contribution to Homœopathy is that I have put both my sons in its service". At Lahore he was once approached by his Allopathic colleagues to donate for a College. He offered to give Rs. 50,000 if they provided a chair for Homœopathy there.

With his passing away the Homœopathic profession has lost one of its best and most experienced exponents. Rarely can it be said of any human being that no one can fill his place, but of Dr. Jai Chand, it is as true as ever it can be. The blow sustained by the Homœopathic profession in his death is inexpressible and simply irreparable. To most of the Homœo-

