

SYNTHESIS IN MEDICINE

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Since the publication of the report "Bhore—Committee" on "Health Survey and Development", an opinion is gaining ground amongst the professionals and officials that the State should encourage, support and rather identify itself with "one System of Medicine which should be regarded neither as Eastern nor Western, foreign or indigenous, but as an integral corpus of scientific knowledge and practice belonging to the whole world and to which every country made its contribution".

This sounds quite plausible on the face of it; and it is a consummation to be devoutly wished for. But a little close thinking would lay bare the confusion of ideas implied in such an assertion. The days are still far off for the development of an ideal synthetic system of Medicine which will accommodate and rightly assess the different methods of approach to the study of diseases and consequential different therapeutic practices as are evident in Homœopathy, so-called Allopathy and Ayurveda. Each of these regular systems of Medicine has its own interpretation and its own way of applications of several fundamental principles of sciences; and these differences of interpretation and the practice growing out of them give each system its distinctive individuality. The great experiment which mankind has attempted upon itself, called medicine, is not yet ended and indeed, as all earthly things, will never be brought to a perfect end, because it is an experiment which deals with the most intricate secrets of nature i.e. Life, Mind and their workings in relation to body. Furthermore, the whole truth regarding life, diseases and cure of sickness, is not the monopoly of any single system of medicine, however widespread it is or however numerous its votaries or whatever degree of state recognition and state help it may enjoy.

Is there then no chance of arriving at a synthesis in medicine? Though the present times are out of joint and the world is passing through an unquiet age of gigantic ferment,

chaos of ideas and clash of mutually antagonistic forces and life currents, a spirit of synthetic and global outlook seems to be growing in every sphere of human activity, social, political and religious. It is in the fitness of things that the same spirit of synthesis should work in the field of medicine for the good of the suffering humanity. It will be my endeavour to present before you my line of thinking which might lead us to the desired goal.

Fundamental Principles

Let us begin from the beginning. What is meant by the term synthesis? Synthesis relates to different principles or different practices. Let me say, at first, what is not meant by synthesis. Synthesis does not mean aggregation, compromise, mere juxtaposition or a queer amalgam of different principles or practices. It is not merely finding the greatest common measure in different system concerned. Synthesis either of different principles or practices, is effected by the discovery or seizing rather on some central principles common to all which will include and utilise in the right place and proportion their particular principles or practices. Synthesis is never effected through mathematical but through logical processes. Synthesis not only includes each and every different principle but transcends each one of them as the principles, often contradictory to one another, are reconciled in it. It is the widest generalisation of a law wherein hitherto discovered individual laws turn out to be but particular applications of it.

And before we talk of synthesis in medicine we should try to ascertain the fundamental principles of different systems of medicine viz. Allopathy, Homœopathy and Ayurveda.

This brings us to the problem of defining a system of medicine. A system of medicine is generally meant to signify the whole corpus of knowledge covering the whole sphere of existing diseases, the various therapeutical means and the knowledge of auxiliary sciences of Chemistry, Physics, Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, Bacteriology, Hygiene etc. In this sense it includes medicine, surgery, obstetrics, gynæcology etc. as clinical subjects and the auxiliary sciences as mentioned above as pre-

clinical subjects. But on closer thinking we find that this is an undue widening of the meaning of the term. Medicine is primarily an art—an art of healing having a life of its own, independent of the nourishment its associated sciences bring.

But the medical art, like other arts and crafts, has benefited greatly from the help derived from other sciences i.e. chemistry, physics, anatomy, physiology, pathology etc. From this standpoint, the above mentioned auxiliary sciences (in so far as they deal with the physico-chemical phenomena underlying vital processes) are indispensable but not basic sciences in the study of medicine, which is primarily a science of life under conditions, normal and abnormal. They are as indispensable as, but not more basic than, speaking and writing are, for instance, to a historian. These sub-sciences are not capable of constructing concepts adequate for the explanation and understanding of phenomena concerning living organism. Thus, the science of medicine, though it takes help from Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology etc. has a distinct field of its own comprising its subject-matter and scope. We should note that the subject-matter of medicines comprises (1) the study of life, health and disease i.e. the science of Man; (2) the study of actions of remedial agents on the human organism in health and diseased condition i.e. the science of Pharmacology and Materia Medica and Therapeutics; and (3) the study of methods of preparation and application of remedial agents to man under different conditions i.e. Pharmacy. Thus medicine has two broad ends:—(1) preservation and promotion of health and (2) cure and prevention of ill health.

Different Approaches

Any system of medicine which aspires to secure a stamp of distinctiveness and completeness, should be comprehensive and wide enough to deal with the subjectmatter and scope of Medicine, as mentioned above. Anatomy, Physiology etc. are to be reckoned as indispensable subjects satellite to Medicine but not an integral part to the corpus of Medicine. These are independent subjects. But this does not mean that these subjects are to be taught in a common teaching institution for

students of different systems of Medicine ; because each system of Medicine studies the facts of these sciences from different points of view. For example, from the Homœopathic point of view pathology can never be the basis of therapeutics whereas the Allopathic School glorifies itself as raised to a scientific standard by treating therapeutics as applied pathology and applied physiology.

The question crops up—why should there be different approaches, different view points, different interpretations to the study of the science of Man? Science is supposed to deal with the truth ; and truth is simple and truth is one. But Man is not simple. He is an indivisible whole of extreme complexity. He is an organism presenting triple aspects, material, vital and mental. He is at the same time, the corpse dissected by the Anatomists ; a system of matter and energy, studied by physical scientists ; a living animal, observed by the biologist ; a conscious mental personality, noted by the psychologists. Therefore, our idea of man varies according to our feelings and our beliefs. A materialist and a spiritualist accept the same definition of a crystal of sodium chloride ; but they do not agree with one another upon that of the human being. A mechanistic physiologist and a vitalistic physiologist do not consider the organism in the same light. But in reality, all these aspects are aspects of one Indivisible whole. There should be no question about the priority of one aspect over the other or one aspect being “more real” than the other.

Positive Vitalism

The Allopathic school, still obsessed with the notion of the basic reality of matter studies man from a mechanistic and chemicophysical point of view ; whereas Homœopathy and Ayurveda study the human organism from the standpoint of life though they combine in themselves the mental and physical planes as well. But it may be agreed that for a physician the category of life is the most relevant to his purpose, the other aspects or categories being used as secondary. Herein lies the basic difference in the approach to the study of medicine between the Allopathic school on the one hand and the schools

of Homœopathy and Ayurveda on the other. Naturally, the difference of the outlook in the study of auxiliary sciences of anatomy, physiology, pathology starts from this basic differences in the study of science of Man. At best, the physiologist of the Allopathic school differs from the standpoint of 'positive vitalism' of the Homœopathic and Ayurvedic school in not postulating any 'vital force' "elan vital" or other I, but in simply saying that, as a matter of fact, organisms require for their scientific descriptions certain biological concepts or categories which are at present irreducible to the concepts of matter.

In short, Allopathy considers human being more as a mechanism whereas the other two schools consider him as an organism which, though including mechanism, yet transcends it. The specific conception of disease, naturally follows from time co-relative conception of life—because disease is nothing but altered life. Health is a condition of the man when he lives with ease; whereas in a diseased condition the man lives but suffers. The materialistic and vitalistic outlook of man lead to the fundamental difference in the notion of causality in the field of medicine. The mechanical cause in the physical world cannot be made synonymous with the 'creative cause' in the domain of life. Physical science reduce all causality to transference and transformation of motion.

Hahnemann

But this conception of causality as applied to the realm of matter can never explain how body can act on mind or mind on body or how the drugs act on the organism as a whole or how the organism reacts to the action of drugs. So instead of delving into speculations and hypothesis, Hahnemann (the founder of Homœopathy gave up the attempt to explain the symptoms or the action of drugs in a living body. To him association or sequence of symptoms was enough. Hence Hahnemann presented Homœopathy as a descriptive science, based on phenomenalism and not concerned principally with casual explanations. The Allopathic school presents medicine as science, based on "Casuality" and therefore subject to "regressus, ad infinitum" to the endless search for cause and everchanging conceptions and terminologies. This basic differ-

ence in thought which is more unconsciously felt than clearly understood, makes it so difficult for the orthodox school to find an approach to Homœopathy.

Another important item in the subject matter of medicine, which differentiates one medical system from another is the Therapeutics. The selection and administration of remedies constitute the science of Therapeutics as the investigation of the properties of drugs constitutes the science of *Materia Medica*. Let us see which medical system has been successful to evolve a science of Therapeutics i.e. where the corpus of Therapeutic knowledge has been reduced to law. As the Allopathic system is more keen to consider man as a piece of Chémico-physical mechanism it is bent on investigating the minute of the chémico-physical processes underlying the vital phenomena; and it thinks that a complete knowledge in that direction will give us the clue to treat patients most successfully. So it treats medicine as applied physiology and applied pathology. So this system ignores any therapeutic law, its possibility or necessity. It wants to treat diseases upon general principles of pathology, by means of which science it proposes to ascertain the interior changes in tissue and structure, which lie at the foundation of and give rise to the symptoms of the patient, and thus get a rational appreciation of the symptoms. It studies the symptoms produced by the drug in the same way. And it has hit upon the law "*Contraria contraries Opponenda*" which means that the relation of opposition should exist between the symptoms and pathological conditions of the patient and symptoms and pathological effects of the drug that we are to select to cure him is capable of producing. But these two principles of Therapeutics were known by Hippocrates who wrote two thousand and four hundred years ago, "There are diseases that have to be treated by contraries and other by similars. Everything depends on the nature of the Disease and of the patient".

The Allopathic system focussed its attention on the disease and held fast to the Law of opposition firmly and strongly advocated by Galen; whereas the Homœopathic system had its attention rivetted to the patient and picked up the laws of similars as the all pervading therapeutic Law. Two doctrines

may appear to be opposite, but this does not mean that the one or the other is absolutely wrong, because there are arguments for and against regarding each of these two opposite doctrines. As for example, the manifestations through which we recognised diseased states had two origins; (1) they may represent the actual destructive effects of the morbid upon tissues and functions of the host. Such manifestations are to be opposed; here it appears quite rational to apply the law of contraries; and (2) they may represent the reactions of the organism against the damage done; here it appears justified to imitate the natural processes by application of the law of Similars. But it is very often difficult or impossible in many cases to distinguish the two sets of symptoms referred to above. Furthermore the disease is neither an action nor reaction but only a new or changed state of the organism caused by the interaction of an external cause with the internal constituents of the organism, resulting in a new form of the whole of the reciprocal action in which cause and effect are ever conjoined. Truth may lie in a third doctrine which unites on a higher plane these two opposite doctrines. We cannot stop at a one-sided doctrine. The mind is driven forward to even wider and greater comprehensions of truth. But we have to wait for a genius who will effect the required synthesis.

The Ayurvedic Therapeutic Law is based on the Law of contraries, but it refers purely to the qualitative plane or the plane of life as understood through its dynamic conceptions of Vayu, Pitta and Kapha. The best procedure for us, now is not to mix up matters but to allow individual therapeutic systems follow their specific laws and lines of thought. But it must be said to the credit of Ayurveda that its therapeutic law is comprehensive enough to include the Laws of Hygiene and that of Dietetics, which the other two systems have yet failed to do.

The Ayurveda and Homœopathy follow the principles of the vitalistic—substantialistic school of thought. According to them life, mind and body are fundamental varieties of the Universe. The Allopathic system of medicine is based on modern materialistic standpoint. The modern Biologist on whom the Allopathic system rests largely, still seeks to avoid all isms”

except organism. Naturally, the approaches to the study of the subject matter of medicine proper vary in the respective schools of medicine. In short, the Allopathic school seems to follow largely the laws of matter; whereas the other two want to follow the laws of mind and life. Ayurveda maintains that vital phenomena are capable of dynamic explanations without reference to anatomico-physiological processes occurring in the organism and that these vital phenomena are capable of being expressed by scientific laws involving terms and concepts appropriate to the category of life, e.g. the Tridosh theory of "Vayu, Pitta and Kapha". Real synthesis of the different medical schools will only be effected when laws embracing those of matter and life are discovered.

We may take a lesson from the study of the physical sciences. With the growth of knowledge the physical science has come to a stage where matter and energy have become convertible terms. It has still to synthesise matter and energy with life and consciousness. Some day it will happen but after the fundamental conceptions of the present day physical science have gone a revolutionary change. Similarly, real synthesis between the three systems of medicine will be brought about only after the revolutionary change in the fundamental concepts regarding the subject matter of the medicine proper. In the meantime we should let each system develop according to its own genius. Any premature attempt at synthesis will defeat its own purpose.

To my mind, the solution of the problem lies in the direction of studying the human being from an organismal point of view which transcends that of mechanism and which combines universal with individual. The scientificity of the synthetic study will depend on the discovery of conceptual terms which will be simultaneously adequate for the understanding of the phenomena, whether physical, vital or mental. The genius of India has already developed such conceptions expressed as "Sattava, Rajas and Tamas"—equally applicable to the phenomena of three planes. These have to be applied in greater detail and with greater thoroughness in the field of medicine. Modern science obsessed with the greatness of the Physical discoveries

and the idea of sole existence of matter, has long attempted to base upon physical data even its study of soul, mind and life and of those workings of nature in man and animal in which a knowledge of psychology founded itself upon physiology and the scrutiny of brain and nervous systems. So long as mind and life along with matter are not accepted as fundamental varieties of nature; so long as this reorientation in outlook is not reflected in the field of medicine—the pursuits of medical art would not be as fruitful as it should be. As such a change in outlook would shake pedagogy, medicine, hygiene, psychology and sociology to their very depths. I am afraid, the rank and file of the so-called modern scientific medical profession would not easily give up their faith; and there will continue a perpetual war of school against school, of system against system to the great detriment of the profession and misfortune of the human races.

—A. B. Patrika, 8th April, 1962.

WHAT IS HOMŒOPATHY

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studies of the Royal Commission of U.K. which sat from 1889 to 1896 and of the London Pox Hospital and many others were out—he would have surely denounced vaccination with far more vigour than many of his followers, whom the author of this article fails to understand. (For valuable informations on this important matter, vide the booklet—“Small Pox and Vaccination” compiled by Drs. Dewan Jaichand and Chandra Prokash, Published by Dr. Chandra Prokash, India. Price Rs. 2/-. (J.K.).

³ This dangerous experiment has been tried more than enough in U.S.A., and the result has been unambiguous. In the whole world, Homœopathy rose to suprememost position in the U.S.A., and maintained it for more than 5 decades. But precisely this formidable experiment has rendered it into a most deplorable condition, where, for instance, Boericke & Tafel and other premier and most dependable manufacturers of Homœopathic drugs, has to thrive mainly on the manufacture of patent medicines and injections—often of course under Homœopathic labels. Further light has been thrown on this situations in the following article “Quo Vadis” by Dr. W. W. Young, M.D., another member of the same American Institute of Homœopathy, as well as by various other previous American Publications e.g., *The Hahnemannian*, July-Sept. 1956 etc., etc. (J.K.).