

CONVOCATION ADDRESS

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Before beginning a sacred duty it is customary to make obeisance to the preceptor or the Lord for invoking their blessings for the fulfilment of the desired objects. First of all, therefore, let us bow down our head to the memory of our Preceptor—the Superman, the great and good Samuel Hahnemann, through whom the All-merciful Supreme God revealed His Truth of Healing Art for the healthy growth of the material body and mind so that they might be kept fit for the realisation of the True Self in the service of the Almighty, the ultimate end, the summum bonum of every human being. Obeisance to the Devotees of the Preceptor who have kept the torch of light burning for about one hundred and fifty years inspite of the blast and storms gushing from opposite directions. The Truth summarised in the motto 'Similia Similibus Curentur' has remained true and unchangeable for so many years, unlike thousands of other theories of medical science that undergo frequent changes consistent with the maxim "The Science of today is the nonsense of tomorrow"—a system of healing art, the product of the splendid genius and startling originality of our Master Hahnemann that has passed through the most scathing criticism unhurt in the fact of the most antagonistic attitude of the vested interests.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since the last Convocation which was held on the 2nd June, 1957 at this hall, we have lost one of our distinguished friends and it is now my melancholy duty to mourn his death. Our friend whose absence we feel today with profound sadness is Dr. N. M. Choudhury, M.D. who occupied this Chair on the

* Delivered by Dr. S. N. Ghosh, M.A., H.M.B., President of the General Council and State Faculty of Homœopathic Medicine, W. Bengal, before the 3rd Convocation held at Senate Hall on the 20th Aug., 1958.

last occasion as President of the General Council and State Faculty of Homœopathy, West Bengal, In him, Bengal, nay India, has lost one of her greatest sons—a renowned physician in the field of Homœopathy, one of the most eminent stalwarts of our school which he loved so well and served so faithfully. He was associated as a guiding leader with almost every useful organisation of Homœopathy not only in Bengal but also in many other provinces of India. He was the author of several very useful works on Homœopathy. He was a strict follower of the Hahnemannian School of Homœopathy with unadulterated faith in the teachings of Hahnemann. We mourn his death and we pay our respectful homage to his memory. May his soul rest in peace.

Ladies and gentlemen, I take this opportunity to do a pleasant duty on your behalf on offering our felicitations to our friend Dr. J. N. Majumdar, M.Sc., F.R.C.S., D.M.S., etc on his being elected to the State Assembly. His unique talents shown not only in his profession but also as a member of the Homœopathic Enquiry Committee, the Ad Hoc Committee and many other Committees of the Central Government and also in the deliberations of the General Council of Homœopathy are well-known to you.

I should also congratulate my friend Dr. B. K. Sarkar, M.B. (Cal.), D.M.S. (Homœo.), the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Faculty for bringing out a critical exposition of Hahnemann's Organon so useful for Homœopathic students and practitioners in grasping the fundamentals of the philosophy, science and art of Homœopathy. It is a work unique of its type and is a valuable contribution to Homœopathic literature.

This is the third Convocation of the General Council and State Faculty of Homœopathy, West Bengal and I am happy to be able to extend to you, ladies and gentlemen—the lovers of Homœopathy—a cordial welcome to this annual function. I express my great joy in having among our midst Her Excellency the Rajyapal of West Bengal who has kindly graced this function by her presence and is inaugurating this ceremony. In spite of her multifarious duties she has kindly consented to inaugurate the function. We have also got some claim upon her.

Sister of Dr. Jai Suryya, an eminent Homœopathic physician of our country, daughter of Srijukta Sarojini Naidu who is adored all over India and also abroad as an embodiment of Indian culture, learning and patriotism she has got a soft corner in her heart for the cause of Homœopathy. On behalf of the General Council and State Faculty of Homœopathy I offer my respectful homage to her Excellency Miss Padmaja Naidu.

I shall now address a few words to my young brethren who have received their diplomas and will be entering on their new career of life.

First of all, I would advise you to beware of the difficulties to be encountered by you in the practical field of your medical practice. Vested interests are determined to devise all possible ways to suppress your system of treatment. The principles and practice of medicine prevalent in the modern system of treatment are widely divergent from yours. The advocates of other systems of treatment have been trained in a particular school of thought holding sometimes diametrically opposite views on many points and you cannot expect them to be sympathetic to you, nay in many cases you will find their activities positively antagonistic.

Even if you are successful in effecting a speedy and permanent cure of your patients, you may not be safe from the antagonism of the opponents of Homœopathy who will refuse to see a fact which can be proved to be demonstrative before their eyes viz. that your remedies are selected on the unerring principle of *Similia Similibus Curentur* proved by induction and verified by experiments while theirs are selected on 'apriory' theories. They will either not be able to realise that you cured your patients or if they could realise it they would feel jealous in your success where they failed, jealousy and prejudice being at the root of all conflicts and 'when the prejudice is strong, the judgment is weak'. Don't try to argue with them as they are determined not to be convinced. At the same time you must not think that any one School contains the whole truth notwithstanding the attitude of your opponents who may boast that one school only has the key to unlock the store-house of Nature to the exclusion of every other.

Even among the brethren of your own profession you must guard yourself against vested interests. Owing to lack of proper control of the teaching and practice of Homœopathy by a competent organisation Homœopathy is being adopted by anybody and everybody without having the most elementary knowledge of medical science and clinical groundwork. The result is that when a complicated case made worse by illjudged handling by such a practitioner is exposed, the prejudice against Homœopathic profession in the locality will increase and your reputation is likely to be affected thereby. If you establish your practice among such lay Homœopaths by employing your hard-earned knowledge you may have to face opposition from them. But you must not be disappointed on that account. Good work always pays in the long run. Quick and permanent cures, specially the curing of others' failures cannot remain hidden but bear fruit in the long run. Once you have been able to convince your clients that your treatment based on a scientific basis is absolutely same ensuring gentle, harmless and permanent cure, they will flock to your chamber in increasing numbers. You must also beware of another class of brethren of your own profession—I mean, those Pseudo Homœopaths who having no implicit faith in the principles of Organon and who saturated with the ideas of Allopathic School will accept only so much of Homœopathy as will enable them to produce the 'Shortcuts' and will not hesitate to resort to other methods of treatment to produce an apparently 'Speedy cure' by gagging the voice of nature manifested by the normal struggle between the vital force and the disease force, never thinking of the difficulties and dangers inherent in the palliative method of treatment.

I ask my young brethren not to lose heart. Notwithstanding the perpetual conflict between your system of treatment and the system of other dominant schools a change in the trend of thought of our brethren of other schools is being noticed. They are unconsciously or indirectly accepting the fundamental truths of our system as will be evident from the trend of thought in Pasteur's discovery of pathogenetic bacteria and Koch's bacteriological postulates in the theories about the ultimate constitution of matter—from Dalton's atomic theory in the beginning of the

19th century changing to the theory of Protons and Electrons down to the discovery of Radioactive elements and specially of Radium towards the end of the 19th century and further researches up to the present time, and we hope a time is not far when a change in their fundamental notions about matter, life and mind and ultimately something beyond it, will be noticed. It is no argument to say that whatever is modern is scientific and reasonable and that Homœopathy being not modern should be rejected. The human body and its normal physiological process and biological functions cannot change from day to day—they are eternal truths. Principles of cures which are based on the empirical and therefore imperfect knowledge of the human mind may change from day to day—only really sound principles which are based on a sound logical basis and which has been verified on innumerable patients for over a century and a half are sure to win in the long run. It is also a good sign that our system of treatment is now being admired by atleast a good number of our brethren of the other camp not because they are satisfied with the scientific explanation of our principle but because they can no longer conscientiously deny the efficacy of our treatment when they notice many of our wonderful cures of their medical and surgical cases by our potentised medicines when their crude drugs and knives fail to respond.

I would like to impress upon you not to think ever that you have known every thing that you require for your practice and need not learn further. I would rather tell you that you have only crossed the threshold of your temple of learning in the field of medical science. 'It is a crime not to know when it might have been known'. You will have to keep up your habit of reading rather more intensely than ever before. You should set apart some portion of your leisure hours enriching the store of your medical knowledge. You must always be conscious of your tremendous responsibility for the life of your patients who have been placed under your care and should have the courage of conviction so that you may stand to them with tact and dignity. We realise that a four years' course that the Faculty prescribed for you is not enough for turning out a really

qualified Homœopathic physician. By a Homœopathic physician we mean a physician who has acquired adequate knowledge in the allied branches of medicine atleast to that extent which is essential for a knowledge of the disease (both from the point of view of the modern school as well as from the knowledge of Homœopathic law of cure i.e. selection of right Hahnemannian angle of vision), for a correct diagnosis, prognosis and general management of patients and a specialised similimum according to the Law of Similars, single medicine and minimum dose in the treatment of all kinds of natural diseases and also well acquainted with the measures connected with public health and prevention of diseases. You must also have an adequate knowledge of Surgery which you may have to employ where surgical interference is necessary. You must not have the idea that certain diseases should be left to the hands of other schools and certain others should be treated by you. When you fail to cure any particular kind of disease you must consider that it is due to your own lack of proper knowledge and not due to any defect in your therapy. If you study the case more carefully and apply your knowledge of materia medica you may ultimately be successful in finding out the right remedy.

One advice I would give specially to my friends who would choose to practise in the mofussil. In the city there are good surgeons as well as physicians and people requiring surgical help go to a surgeon. But in the mofussil a physician has to treat patients for their normal diseases and at the same time he has to take up the knife. So those of you who will be going to mofussil should have good clinical ground work for the treatment of diseases and at the same time should be qualified to take up the knife when need be.

I would ask you to remember one thing. The only truth that remains eternally unchanged and unaltered is the Truth Divine that comes down to us in the form of Revelation through the channels of His Associates and Devotees but any other thing which is the result of the deliberations of the sensuous organs i.e. the results of perception, conception and inference are changeable according to the progress of the mental functions. So is a theory, the result of the experience of human mind.

Science is, therefore, progressive. There can be no finality in science. The theories of today may be modified, wholly or in part to-morrow. Do not think, therefore, that in Homœopathy the last word has been said. It required a superhuman genius to establish the fundamental theories of Homœopathy and during a period of about a century and a half nobody has succeeded to alter the Homœopathic principles materially. Hering, Dunham, Lippe, Farrington and even Kent of modern times have only embellished these principles. In the theories of our Master there may be obscurity of conception but on that account we must not minimise the genius of our Master. He has never said that everything uttered by him should be taken as a gospel truth not meant to be elaborated by anybody in future. Until and unless, however, a greater genius than our Master appears in the field and successfully modifies his principles in an unmistakable way, all of us should stand under his banners and follow his instructions.

My young friends, we are alive to the legitimate rights and privileges that you are entitled to. You must have a status in life for which you have proved yourselves fit. We are trying our utmost in putting Homœopathy in its legitimate place. It is an irony of fate that your system of treatment, though proved unmistakably efficacious in the treatment of diseases, performing miracles in atleast certain types of diseases, though cheaper than any other system of treatment and thus suitable for the poverty-stricken mass of our country has ever remained grossly neglected by our State Government. Training in it has remained deplorably unorganised for lack of Government patronage and duly qualified physicians have received no official recognition. Medical certificates presented by qualified Homœopaths including those who have obtained their D.M.S. diplomas after having prosecuted a full four years' course according to the syllabus prescribed by the Faculty and approved by the State and those who obtained their diplomas after having prosecuted a regular four years' course of studies, before the Faculty was established, in scheduled institutions which had been later on recognised by the Faculty and the State are not yet accepted by Government offices. It is a pity that Bengal though univer-

sally admitted as the first nursery-house for the growth and development of Homœopathy in the East lags behind other sister provinces so far as the State recognition and legislative enactments are concerned. Legislative Acts for the recognition of Homœopathy have already been passed in the States of Bombay, U.P., Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala and other States but it is unfortunate that West Bengal's claims have been so far ignored. In spite of repeated prayers from this Council our State Government has turned down the proposals for legislative enactment. Reasons of this attitude are beyond our conception. The scientific basis on which Homœopathy is established has been proved in different countries all over the world. In Bengal I would only mention the name of Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar M.D., D.L., C.I.E. He was a worshipper of science. It was he who founded the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science—an institution which the whole of India is proud of—an institution in which scientists like Sir C. V. Raman, Dr. Krishnan, Dr. J. C. Ghosh, Dr. J. N. Mukherjee, and other eminent scientists worked and produced their wonderful researches. Dr. Sircar who was one of the greatest Indian Allopaths of his time in Calcutta, the most shining star in the horizon of Allopathic physicians was converted to the Homœopathic system of treatment in 1867. A man of his calibre could not certainly surrender to quackery. His conversion to Homœopathy added fuel to the fire of jealousy of the Allopaths. For this he met with opposition, persecution and even excommunication. He had been a prominent member of the Faculty of Medicine of the Calcutta University and he was practically forced to resign from this body, although his conviction in his science of healing art was strongly supported by distinguished members of the Senate like Sir Goorudas Banerjee and others. Since Dr. Sircar's time other eminent Homœopathic physicians showed their wonderful success in this system of treatment—the late Dr. Pratap Chandra Majumdar, Dr. B. L. Bhadury, Dr. Younun, Dr. Palit, Dr. D. N. Ray, Dr. J. N. Ghosh, Dr. J. N. Majumdar, Dr. S. K. Nag, Dr. N. M. Chowdhury and others.

With all Glory to the Almighty and in the name of Samuel Hahnemann and his followers, I thank heartily our honoured

guests, colleagues and dear students for their kind and patient hearing and wish each and every one of them a happy and prosperous career.

Jai Hind

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND STATE FACULTY OF HOMŒOPATHIC MEDICINE, WEST BENGAL*

The General Council and State Faculty of Homœopathic Medicine, Bengal was established by a Statutory order of the then Government of Bengal in 1943. The Statutes were recommended by an Advisory Board which consisted of many eminent Homœopaths like Drs. J. N. Majumdar, S. C. Ghose, J. N. Ghose, A. N. Mukherjee etc. The first Council was nominated by the Government. A sum of Rs. 6,800/- was made over to the Council from the Government which were contributed by some members of the Advisory Board towards the cost of establishment and maintenance of the Council as the Government made it clear that it was not prepared to take any financial responsibility whatsoever. After partition of Bengal, the Statutes were amended by the Government of West Bengal, and the Council was reconstituted and nominated. Since then three elections have been held, the last being in 1956, and elected representatives from the Registered Homœopathic practitioners of West Bengal constitute the majority of the members of the present Council.

Homœopathic teaching and profession were in a chaotic condition before the establishment of this Council. There were

* Read before the 3rd Convocation of the General Council and State Faculty of Homœopathic Medicine, West Bengal, held at the Senate Hall on 28th Aug. 1958.