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EDITORIAL

ON STANDARDIZATION

What is standardization? It is the process of evolving a methodology in respect of an action directed towards a pre-determined purpose which is capable of being repeated to obtain consistent results. From the above definition, it implies, that the process involves three conditions of which, two are constants namely, the purpose and the standard while, the third component--the methodology is variable and is in the process of evolution. Thus, standardization demands at the outset that the purpose is clearly defined and a standard set so that all action is directed towards achieving that purpose and the results compiled in order that they can be compared with the pre-set standard and the course of action is determined.

Why is standardization necessary? Every action by man has a purpose behind it. Each action results in an experience to him. This he desires to communicate to others so that they too can share it with him. To repeat an experience, the action needs to be repeated. An action is capable of repetition to result in a similar experience when the methodology is clearly defined. Standardization thus becomes a necessary pre-condition for an action to be repeated to result in a similar experience.

When is an action standardized? When an action is experimented and experienced by many, over again, in a given situation and their experiences are compared and conformed by the given standard to result in achieving the purpose for which it is designed, it is said to be standardized. This concept requires further elaboration. Now, there could be similar actions resulting in similar experiences but, the intensity of that experience might vary from one person to the other. A standard decides the quality of action. It gives direction to it. The intensity of the experience is measured by the values that get attached to the standard. In other words, they quantify the action. The concept of standardization includes both.

Where is a standardized action needed? Life and activity are concomitant expressions. Where life exists, action is inevitable. Since every action is directed towards a purpose its standardization becomes an integral part for

the life process to go on along the direction given to it. There is no sphere where standardization is not needed. It thus becomes an universal expression. Where this natural process is tampered, what results is disharmony leading to dissolution. A standardized action carries the qualification of being scientific. Scientific knowledge demands consistency of action. This fact leads to yet another important concept.

Who lays the standard? Whether man sets the standard for science or it is the science that provides it to man? This issue can be settled once it is defined how a standard is set. Man and Nature constantly interact. Out of this interaction results experience. That experience is subjective to him. He communicates his experience to others. Others too corroborate similar experience. They are not aware how such experience is produced. They desire to know it. They observe Nature carefully and record their observations. These are analysed and certain ideas are formulated which becomes a working hypothesis for subsequent investigation in respect of the phenomena. By repeated experimentation the hypothesis gets verified. A certain methodology also evolves in the process by which the experience gets repeated when a certain action is repeated. A similar action when results in a common experience to many the subjectivity in the experiment gets eliminated, the experience in this instance becomes objective, the hypothesis gets converted into a standard reference point and the method and technique by which the experience is repeated is standardized. This does not imply that it is the only method or technique possible for that experience to be produced. But at that moment of time and circumstances it is the standardized action known in respect of that experience. Over a period of time it is capable of being improved in quality. Standardization is thus a continuous process as long as the standard and the purpose remain constant.

As time passes and the experience repeats over and over again the standard gets more and more confirmed and acquires the status of a law. Laws are of two kinds: the Nature's laws and man-made laws. Nature behaves in a particular order. Man through his interactions with her discovers them. They are the Nature's laws. They are universal and are relatively constant. On the other hand there are laws that man imposes on himself and the society he lives in for achieving a certain purpose, peculiar to the situation in which he is placed but, it may not hold good for another man placed in a totally different situation. Such laws are not stable and change from one point of time to the other. They have a limited but well defined objective.

From the foregoing discussion it would be apparent that laws and standards belong to neither Nature alone nor man alone. They are the outcome of interactions between the two and both become the essential components in establishing them.

With this background, let us examine the field of Homoeopathy. Homoeopathy is a system of therapeutics based on well-defined laws of

Nature. The two laws, *Similia Similibus Curantur* is the Therapeutic Law discovered by Hahnemann and the Law of Direction of Cure discovered by Hering have been experienced and re-affirmed time and again by the advocates of Homoeopathy, are the corner-stones on which the entire system rests. The purpose of each law is evident. Both give directions to action, the first directs the choice of action while the second directs whether the action follows the course by which the purpose can be achieved. Both serve as reference points to which the results of action can be constantly compared and conformed so that the purpose is achieved. The objects of study are man in health and in disease, and the drug in their totality so that, in respect of the former two a judgment can be arrived at the degree of deviation from normalcy and in case of the latter two, a correspondence can be established between the disease and the drug.

It is obvious that a maximum correspondence between two can only be established through a study of all the attributes in their totality. Such a study would demand the most careful observation of man from all the different aspects and whatever concepts emerge from such observation are integrated in a logical manner which is termed as the totality. Since the study of attributes is a purely subjective phenomenon it requires to be supported by objective evidence on which the conclusions are based, which is the data recorded. Without data base a totality erected has little scientific value since the experience does not become communicable in a meaningful way which is objective and verifiable by others. Besides such a record has to be adequate in order that its analysis and synthesis is capable of being demonstrated. Since the data record forms the basis of one's experience, the experiences of different persons become comparable and meaningful only when there is a similarity in the methods of recording it. Standardized Case Record thus becomes the first criteria for all subsequent scientific activity in the field of Homoeopathy.

At the time this write-up is going to the press, the pundits in homoeopathic field are busy debating over the issue of standardizing a case record form for the purpose of homoeopathic research. All are in agreement that it is an essential prerequisite for a meaningful research activity in the field. But they are unable to come to a consensus on any record form already available to them.

Why? Is it on account of deficiencies inherent in the case record forms which are in use? Or is it because of a disagreement on what constitutes the standard with which it is comparable? Which is the standard for a homoeopathic case record? Perhaps, if aphorisms 4 to 6 of the *Organon of Medicine* are meaningfully interpreted they provide the answer for solving the problem.

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