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PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE OF DIFFERENT SYSTEMS OF MEDICINE

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The Science of Medicine is the oldest of sciences, still it is the least advanced of all. This is due to the fact that, phenomena of Life (in state of health as well as disease), on which the Science of Medicine depends, are the least understood in comparison with any other phenomena of Nature. This again is due to the following facts: (i) Phenomena of living matter is far more dynamic, intricate, sublime and deep than the phenomena of non-living matter. (ii) Man who studies Life, is himself a living matter (of course of the highest form) hence here the object of study and the subject studying the same tend to confuse and complicate each other far more inexorably and subtly than while studying the phenomena of non-living objective nature.

This being the situation it is quite natural that there should be diversity in approach towards the phenomena of Life. And thus have developed so many Systems or Schools of Medicine—Allopathic, Homœopathic, Naturopathic, etc. on world scale; and Ayurvedic, Unani Chinese Acupuncture therapy etc. on different regional basis not to speak of the different magic or mystic schools as they fall beyond the scope of science.

Although the main ground of difference among these schools is in the sphere of Therapeutics still, there are serious differences in other spheres too e.g., attitude towards and understanding regarding diseases, interpretation and significance of

Pathology and Pathophysiology, etc. Of course, gradually the difference diminishes as we approach towards more basic spheres e.g., Physiology, Anatomy, Biochemistry, environmental phenomena etc. These differences in view-points and methods are not based on simple whims, but on certain truths as found out and corroborated by experiment and experience, and hence cannot be hushed away as bunkums or empty notions. But none of them may be complete or whole truth and moreover, each has its own practical difficulties and limitations; and that is the main reason why none of them can fight out or annihilate the others.

It is quite natural that these differences should lead to controversy, and these controversies again to antagonism. Thus far the situation is not unwholesome; as truth can be developed best by dialectical antagonism. But very unfortunately these antagonism often go so far as to breed bitterness, even animosity. And this animosity has actually grown in the most virulent and persistent form between the two main schools on world scale viz. the Allopathy, the so-called old or orthodox school, and Homœopathy. The following are some of the main factors responsible for the situation:—

ON THE ALLOPATHIC SIDE—(1) Its long historical predominance nourished by tradition and usage of last 2500 years.

(2) Various prejudices and fixed notions with respect to diseases and methods of treatment which naturally crop up and prevail due to factor no. 1.

(3) Easier to learn and practise as its methods are more stereotyped, requiring comparatively little personal effort and merit.

(4) Vested interests—hoards of money have been invested in the Allopathic line. The money-bags cannot afford to risk their fate by indulging in any other line, especially when the latter has no sufficiently lucrative prospect.

ON THE HOMŒOPATHIC SIDE—(1) It is very new in the field of Medicine. Its theories and methods are in many respects far ahead of ideas of Science as it stands today, and so does not appeal to the crude mechanical materialistic outlook of common people.

(2) Many of its tenets go against the long cherished ideas of the intelligentsia especially, the medical scientists.

(3) Some of the opinions and writings of some homœopathic authors verge upon or even gets mixed up with metaphysics which has nothing to do with science.

(4) It requires an extra-ordinary amount of patience, diligence, intelligence and introspection on the part of the practitioner.

(5) Occasional failure of this method for various reasons—most common of which are—(a) Confusion or total lack of characteristic individualizing symptoms in certain cases. (b) Negligence or hastiness on the part of the prescriber or the patient, a special problem in the present age of speed and hurry. (c) Lack of sufficient confidence of the prescriber himself on his prescription and method.

These failures due to whatever cause, as a matter of course, give enough impetus to the enemies of Homœopathy.

Still, Homœopathy—an infant in the long life-history of Medicine—has survived and that not at all poorly or feebly for last 150 years, fighting against severe attacks from all quarters since its very birth all alone, absolutely without any support from any source except of course only from the people who have tested it. This simple fact, if not anything else, is a sufficient proof of the fact that it has some substance in it which cannot be crushed or smoked away.

Thus we see that the controversy and conflict between Allopathy and Homœopathy is based on no superficial factor like individual failures, or mutual slanders etc. as some people are inclined to think, but on more basic views, principles and methods. And these views, principles and methods are quite well established on solid grounds. So no side should hope to annihilate the other very easily.

But, however serious and basic these differences and controversies be they should not, in any case, I entreat again, lead to animosity; as animosity and for the matter of that, any passion blocks the sense-perceptions (vision, hearing etc.) and blunts the intelligence and leads the Scientist the seeker of Truth

to high-walled closet of *sectarianism, dogmatism and complacency* blind and deaf to the rest of the world.

But unfortunately for the Science of Medicine severe and crippling animosity does exist, especially between its two main systems—as great detriment to the interest of the Science itself, as well as of mankind in general. Then, how to get rid of this serious menace?

Some people, especially in Europe mostly Homœopaths, are of the opinion that the solution of the problem lies in having only *one system of medical education*, (which naturally would be in the line of the Orthodox School); and Homœopathy as well as any other system, because it concerns *only* (?) therapeutics, should be taught from a special chair preferably, in the post-graduate course. But in our opinion, this suggestion cannot solve the problem, at least in the situation prevailing to-day, for the following reasons:—(1) The difference between the two systems is *not only* on the ground of therapeutics alone, but also in attitude towards Pathology, Physiology, Etiology, ideas of Palliation and Cure and many other aspects of medical science, (2) Homœopathy, a new-comer in the long life-history of Medicine, cannot expect a cordial and warm reception from Allopathy which has been dominating over the field for pretty long ages; what it can utmost expect is subjugation and lording in open and in various subtle forms, as is happening in the U.S.A., and thus vitiation and serious damage for itself. In the history of human civilization, we do not find discovery or growth of any new truth of any serious importance, in any field of life and nature, without bitter struggle against old belief, notions and customs; and Homœopathy cannot expect to be an exception in this matter. Each and every line of the present day sciences had to establish itself fighting a stiff struggle against mediaevalism, and none of them could have attained to their present state of glory, if they had taken their shelters in the Churches, the seats of culture and science in those times. Both Science and Religion and for that matter humankind has benefitted greatly from their separate existence, and could have benefitted much more if only the hostility between them had been less virulent. But in spite of ferocious, often fatal hosti-

lity on the part of the Old Faith, Truth has been ultimately asserting itself most unshakably.

In the same manner, Homœopathy if it has to survive and progress, and thus serve its mission for mankind:—(a) has to stand on its own ground, instead of taking shelter under the comfortable canopy of the dominant school; (b) effectively fight out all attacks on its theory and practice, on the basis of sound reasoning and concrete evidence, instead of using harsh words or counter-slanders; at the same time keep constantly alert about real criticisms and conscious about its own shortcomings and disadvantages instead of indulging in complacency of the Ostrich; (c) must keep its senses vigilant to the outer world, accept and assimilate without prejudice any real truth already in existence or that may be discovered, *only provided they do not go against its own basic tenets*; even with respect to those facts and discoveries or empirical experiences which in the present stage of science, are not corroborated by its basic principles and hence cannot be accepted as they are it should keep up an open-minded attitude in lieu of shutting up all windows of senses and perceptions. In any case, Homœopathy, if it has to survive must maintain living link with the scientific progress of the human society, which is fast advancing in every field including Biology and some branches of Medicine e.g., Physiology, Pathophysiology etc.

For these purposes, peaceful co-existence should be our basic policy, whatever may be the policy of the other side. Of course this does not mean any compromise; nor any shifting of camp, unless and until thoroughly convinced as to the merits or demerits of any side. We can progress more and more towards perfect and whole truth, not by compromise, but by struggle over controversial points; but these struggles should be aimed at mutual understanding in lieu of vilification. Homœopathy has nothing to fear from peaceful co-existence, it has nothing to lose through the process nor does it require any foul arms like slander, coercion etc. because it is based on solid truth, and *ultimate truth also is definitely more on its side.*