

AN ADDRESS

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Permanent Secretary to The Minister of Health,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am most grateful for the great honour you have shown me in asking me to preside at this Fifth Seminar of the Ceylon Homœopathic Society. I feel the chief reason for your asking me to occupy this high chair is because I am your guest and the courtesy shown to a guest has been extended to me. All the same it is a proud moment in my life and my pleasure at being in your midst is more than I can describe. There has been a great and common cultural heritage of Ceylon and India and I would like to forge by my visit a closer bond between the Homœopaths of the two neighbouring countries.

Herber Spencer the famous English Philosopher said that "There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all argument, and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance. That principle is *condemnation before investigation.*"

Lest this charge lie at our door I propose that this august assembly of medical men and enlightened people scrutinise with me today the system of therapeutics that goes under the name of Homœopathy. Let it not be condemned without investigation.

Homœopathy was discovered by Hahnemann one hundred and fifty years ago. He was a most renowned German physician, a linguist knowing eight languages including Arabic, a translator of books on medicine and chemistry and a noted chemist. He stumbled across the principle of Homœopathy accidentally while translating a medical work and later experimenting with cinchona bark, from which quinine is derived.

The distinctive features of this science are:—

1. A study of disease phenomenon in detail including

symptoms of the mind and reaction of individuals to environmental stimuli of all type. It is thus the first therapeutic system to advocate a psychosomatic approach and to treat the patient as a whole and not in fragments or parts. Also it treats the subtle dynamic causes of disease and not just end results. To give you an example—a boy was brought to me with multiple warts on the hand. His father had died a few years earlier of malignant disease and the mother was very anxious. The boy had one wart which was removed surgically. Thereafter many warts appeared because the inherent disease in the body which had produced the first wart had not been cured. Only the end result had been removed. After a few weeks of homœopathic treatment the warts fell off by themselves and there has been no recurrence for the last six years. The only scar on his hand is that of the operation, the others fell off without leaving any scar.

2. A study of drug effects by experiments on healthy human beings. These are called "Provings."

3. A therapeutic law which provides the necessary link between the two above i.e. this law makes possible the application of the knowledge about drugs to disease states. This law is embodied in 3 words —"Similia Similibus Curentur." Translated it means, "Let likes be treated by likes". Homœopathy is the only science of therapeutics that has a law and a fixed basis for its principle and practice.

These are the three fundamentals and from it flow some rules of practice. The important ones being:—

4. Single drug—only one drug is administered at a time for all the symptoms of the patient in sharp contrast to galenicals or mixtures of medicines or the practice of giving many medicines each one meant to suppress a single symptom. Single drug permits of better observation of effects.

5. Infinitesimal dose is administered as a general practice. I will refer to this again.

6. Individualisation—Homœopathy does not treat diseases by name but sick individuals. There is a subtle difference between the two. A Homœopath considers not only the morbid influence or disease producing factor but also how it affects a par-

ticular patient. This entails a painstaking case history and I am here reminded of an interesting incident. Once the famous Prince Bismark of Germany was ill and it so happened that the reputed Government physicians and high ranking allopaths could not cure him. Somebody suggested a Homœopath, who was sent for. This man took out a sheet of paper and started noting his case history and questioned the Prince on every detail of his illness. Prince Bismark used to be exceedingly busy and so got irritated at this long questioning. He said "Doctor are your never ending questions ever going to end." The doctor got red in the face, got up, packed his things and saying, "I thought you needed a doctor, but you need a vet," he left. As it happened after sometime in view of Bismark's continued ill-health he had to be called again and his treatment cured the Prince.

The time and the occasion does not permit that we scrutinise in detail each of the above homœopathic tenets and see how the experiments and writings of some of the foremost scientists of today conclusively prove the soundness of these principles. In any case what may present some difficulty of comprehension to an average mind is the principle of Similia or the use of the small dose.

Regarding this basic principle of Similia—of using a like remedy—allopaths may find it easier of comprehension if they look to what is happening in the entire field of vaccine therapy and of allergic states—I mean the curative desensitising treatment and not the suppressive use of antihistaminics. The vaccines are invariably made from the causative factors of the disease they are supposed to prevent or cure. This principle is not a theory or the flight of a man's imagination. It is based on actual experiments and these can always be repeated. It was not one or two or even four experiments. The therapeutic law was enunciated by Hahnemann as of universal application only after experimenting with twenty-two drugs over a long period of eighteen years. All this while Hahnemann was himself surprised at the results and only reported them in the medical journals asking others to verify and see if he was correct. Later when he was criticised, in the true spirit of a scientist

he always said, "Experiment the way I have done and if you don't get same results then publish your failures and shout from house tops that Hahnemann is mad." That is what I would like to repeat today—try it in the proper way and if your observations are different proclaim so.

As a matter of fact the impact of Homœopathy has gradually changed the entire pattern of medical practice which is plain to any student of the history of medicine. It has brought about a transformation from the universal practice of blood letting to blood banks, stopped the practice of inducing vomitings and purgings and the wide use of complex mixtures of disgusting medicines. Blood letting was such a common practice that an insect was discovered which could draw blood it was named Leech. If you look up the dictionary leech really means a physician and this insect did the physicians work. Allopathic practice today is coming so near to Homœopathy in many fields that Dr. W. W. Young, my teacher in U.S.A. used to say that there is no risk of homœopathy becoming extinct. Modern medicine is happily blundering into it and would rediscover it and practice it even if it be under some other name.

After its discovery the science of Homœopathy has by now withstood the crucial acid test in the clinic for one hundred and fifty years. This is after all what matters most.

Research—I have often heard it said by critics that Homœopathy has no research of the type Allopathy has. It is static. On this matter there are two aspects. The first most important aspect is that homœopathy is no theory, it is no hypothesis built on the shifting sands of speculative imagination or personal beliefs. It is not a medical fashion that has its heyday and then passes into oblivion to be forgotten if not condemned. It has been hammered out of hard facts by sound reasoning and inductive logic. Scientific laws don't change nor can Hahnemann's Homœopathy founded on the bedrock of unchangeable laws of nature. With us the science of yester years does not become the nonsense of today nor the science of today is going to become the nonsense of tomorrow. Therefore, whatever research there is in homœopathy is altogether of a different pattern and type. No remedies used one hundred

and fifty years ago have been discarded. Their field of utility can be better defined, their *modus operandi* better understood, more drugs can be added and means sought for making their selection easier and more precise. But as far as remedies are concerned there is no subtraction and replacement, it is only an addition to our armamentarium. Such research then is not on such an extensive scale and does not attract the same attention and publicity especially as it is not backed by the financial interest of any drug house. Moreover, Homœopathy does not treat disease names so there are no spectacular announcements that such and such a drug has been found as very efficacious for pneumonia and such and such a one is a panacea for all cases of cancer.

The second aspect is that lacking the aid from the Government and rich pharmaceutical concerns even the research that is possible and desirable has not been done. Nobody can be more conscious of this than myself. In 1946 I wrote to Dr. John Patersen that, "after decades of static inertia the only research that is now being done is by yourself in the field of Bacteriology in relation to Homœopathy and by Dr. W. E. Boyd in the field of Biophysical phenomena and emanometer trying to give an objective demonstration of the energy in our potencies."

New Diseases—I have also been asked as to what do we do for new diseases. Recently there was the Asiatic Flu, where the virus was different from previous epidemics, and previous to that the Mystery Disease—a form of Encephalitis. I wish to emphatically state that for Homœopathy there are no new diseases, no mystery illnesses and a Homœopath cannot be caught napping whatever the situation. It is a foolproof science. As already said it treats the individual and not the disease name. This individual has not changed. If I was to change my clothes, I do not become a different person. So also when diseases assume new forms the individual behind it that seeks and needs your help is the same. Homœopathy aims at strengthening the defensive powers of the individual and thus get rid of disease.

This aspect was very forcefully and brilliantly demonstrated when for the first time there was a cholera pandemic affecting Europe. The symptoms of the disease were written

to Hahnemann. He recommended four medicines for the different stages of the disease without seeing a single case. These remedies were so efficacious that the previous ban on the practice of Homœopathy was removed in various European states.

Misconceptions about Homœopathy—The first misconception is about our attitude to surgery. The charge is made that Homœopathy has no surgery. Yes, it has none but neither has Allopathy. Homœopathy, Allopathy and Ayurveda strictly speaking are systems of therapeutics, drug therapy, of treatment of diseases by administration of medicines. Surgery is a mechanical science and may be needed at times by any system of therapeutics. Advancement of science is no monopoly of any system. It is for the common good of mankind. No homœopath has ever tried to bring a broken bone into position by a dose of medicine. Once it is put in position and given support by a splint or plaster he may prescribe to help in the union of the fracture. Everyone would agree with me that surgery comes in where medicine fails. It is this fundamental fact that appears to create a difference between the need for surgery by Homœopaths and practitioners of other systems. The panorama of diseases that Homœopathy can tackle is much wider and therefore the need for surgery considerably less. The only other difference here is that a Homœopath would use medicine preoperatively and postoperatively with a view to prevent or cure as the case may be any complications.

With regard to the other auxiliary method of diagnosis and treatment e.g. Radiology (X-Ray examination), clinical laboratory methods, physiotherapy etc. Again these may be needed less often as treatment is not directly dependant on it but they are needed all the same. There was a very interesting incident at a meeting of the Delhi Homœopathic Board while discussing the desirability of introducing Homœopathy as a special form of therapy in the National Health Service Scheme. The Allopathic representative of the Health Department maintained that those that opt for Homœopathy would not be allowed facilities for laboratory tests, X-Ray or dental care or optical attention. What a mistaken notion and narrow outlook! I asked him what was Roentgen, the discoverer of X-Rays, a physicist or an

Allopath? Then how does his discovery become the monopoly of a particular system of treatment? Are practitioners of other systems not using a Blood Pressure apparatus because it was invented by Dudgeon, a homœopath? Or Skinner's mask for giving anaesthesia because this famous obstetrician and gynaecologist became a Homœopath later in life?

A third misconception about Homœopathy is the question of small dose. The two have got so mixed up that to many people the only thing that Homœopathy means is the small dose. The joke has gone to ridiculous lengths—one instance is that if a pinch of sulphur is put in the ocean at New York then a homœopathic potency of it could be had at the English coast. Some people likened these medicines to diluted moonshine, forgetting that even the moon has a powerful influence in our lives.

The first important observation I wish to more emphatically make is that the principle of Homœopathy—"Similia Similibus Curentur"—"Let likes be treated by likes" has nothing to do with the small dose. It was discovered and successfully applied long before a consideration of the dose. It is not the smallness of the dose but an application of the similia principle that makes a drug Homœopathic. Yet the use of small doses or infinitesimals has been a greater hurdle in a wider appreciation and adoption of homœopathy than even its seemingly paradoxical principle. It is true that the reduction of the dose is a necessary corollary to this principle but the scientist of today should not have so much difficulty in comprehending the power in the infinitesimal as did the more obtuse scientists of the last 150 years. In any case now we have conclusive proof of some power even in the very high potencies of medicines prepared according to the special Homœopathic pharmaceutical methods. This much needed proof has been supplied by the biophysical research of Dr. Boyd on an instrument called the Emanometer. His work has been investigated by a committee of experts which included Sir (now Lord) Thomas Horder, M.D., F.R.C.P., physician to the Royal Family, Col. Heald, Medical Adviser in Civil Aviation, Lt.-Col. Leproy, Head of Wireless Research, Air Ministry and some more scientists. These scientists in their report have justified our presumption that the energy in our medi-

cines can be detected and physically demonstrated with a convincing degree of probability (statistically 33,000,000 to 1 in favour).

I will draw just one parallel here. In the field of Allergy, where Homœopathy and Allopathy, come close together, an Allopath uses the causative factor (antigen) of the disease to cure (desensitise) the patient thus using the Homœopathic Similia principle. When using a medicament on this principle he naturally finds that using a large dose brings on or increases the disease states so he is forced to use microdoses thus accepting another Homœopathic tenet.

The second observation is that Homœopathic potencies are not simple dilutions. Something subtle and powerful comes into play in their special mode of preparation. This has been very ably and conclusively demonstrated again by the researches of late Dr. W. E. Boyd of Glasgow. He conducted a large series of fully controlled scientific experiments in which it was demonstrated that the effects of dilutions and potencies of mercuric chloride on the hydrolysis of starch by diastase were different.

Lay Practitioners—Though I am not thoroughly conversant with the conditions of Homœopathic practice in Ceylon but from the reports that I have had I understand that the majority of Homœopaths here have not had the good fortune of institutional training. Their efforts at self-training need to be appreciated rather than suppressed. Since they are already in the profession and will continue to be so facilities should be provided for them to get further training. The efforts of the Ceylon Homœopathic Society in this direction are laudable. And to prevent irresponsible people taking to it in future registration should be instituted. We have had exactly the same problems to contend with in India and for future it has been solved by instituting registration as for practitioners of Allopathy. But here there is a big responsibility for the authorities. *There can be no control without simultaneous provision of training facilities on an adequate scale. Then alone will there be enough qualified doctors to fulfil the public demand.*

Type of Institutions—The first requirement everywhere is of hospital facilities and simultaneously or subsequently attached educational institutions.

Educational facilities can be any one of the following three types:—

1. Postgraduate—after graduation in Allopathy.
2. Bicameral—Common study of the basic medical sciences for students of Allopathy and Homœopathy and then separately for special subjects of materia medica and therapeutics.
3. Separate Homœopathic Institutions.

Whatever advice the Government here may receive from Western countries it is my conviction that for the conditions prevailing here only this last one answers the purpose. Facilities for postgraduate study can be provided additionally if required in the same institution.

In conclusion, if it is felt that Homœopathy is a scientific therapeutic system and is undoubtedly successful in the clinic, it becomes the duty of the State to encourage it and provide all facilities.

Before I resume my seat may I just give you the opinion of Mahatma Gandhi. "Public can rightly tell you about its efficacy but however it is the latest and refined method of treating the patient economically and conveniently. Government must encourage and patronise it in our poor country. I have received the Homœopathic pamphlets and the Organon. So far as I know, precisely, late Dr. Hahnemann was a man of superior intellectual medical nerve. I bow before his skill and the herculian and humanitarian labour he did. His memory wakes us again and you are to follow him; let the opponents hate, for the existence of the principles and practice of Homœopathy, which in reality cures a larger percentage of cases than any other method of treatment and it is beyond all doubt, safer and more economical and to be most *complete medical science*."

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your patient hearing and the members and office-bearers of the Ceylon Homœopathic Society for this opportunity of meeting you.*

* Lecture delivered at Colombo on 16th August, 1960, at the opening of the Vth Homœopathic Seminar of the Ceylon Homœopathic Society, opened by Dr. W. J. A. VanLangenberg, M.B.E., C.C.S., B.Sc. Science & Eng. (Lond.), A.C.G.I., Permanent Secretary to the Hon. Minister of Health.