

## IS HOMŒOPATHY NEEDED TODAY ?

DR. P. SANKARAN, L.I.M.

WORTHY PRESIDENT, SIR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

First of all I shall thank you for the privilege you have offered me of addressing you, my colleagues from the world over, and then I shall proceed to the subject.

The medical man of the present day looks back at the triumphs of his profession, with a sense of satisfaction and pride. Not only has the problem of sickness been removed from the realm of ignorance and superstition but an attitude of scientific observation and logical analysis—adopted by the evolution of effective therapeutic techniques, with the result that considerable progress has been made towards the goal of universal health. A better appreciation of the true ætiological factors involved in the incidence of illnesses has mainly contributed towards this advance. The last few years especially have witnessed pharmacological and therapeutic advances which will be considered unparalleled in the history of medicine. Human mortality has been steadily cut down and life expectation increased. This trend is particularly evident in the slashing of infant mortality. So the medical man of this era might feel justified in assuming that the goal is within our reach.

Such, however, would be a purely subjective estimate. A more objective assessment, if undertaken, would reveal to us our many deficiencies and limitations. We shall find that there are still vast uncharted areas where we continue to grope. For example, our knowledge of pharmacodynamics, of the exact role of the many elements that vitalize our body, of the ultimate nature of bacteria, of the full significance of symptoms, and of the very nature of disease itself is still too superficial. These are but a few instances to show the limitation of our knowledge. As has been summed up by Dr. Alexis Carrel :

“It is quite evident that the accomplishments of all the sciences having man as an object remain insufficient, and that our knowledge of ourselves is still most rudimentary.”

It must be further admitted that modern medical therapy is still largely empirical and its results often undependable.

Even as we acknowledge that medical progress has not been as uniform and unequivocal as it has been spectacular, a question arises if it has been at least in the correct direction. No doubt, general mortality has been lowered, life expectation appreciated etc., etc. But as scrupulous persons we cannot remain satisfied with such statistical data which provides but a panoramic view. To obtain a more comprehensive and true picture, it would be necessary for us to compare the extent and types of illnesses and causes of death as at present with those as they were fifty years back. Unfortunately such data are not available and so one is forced to be content by extracting the following table where placed side by side are the causes of mortality in the three countries—Ceylon, the United Kingdom and the United States, for the years 1948 and 1949. Ceylon is a typically Asiatic state, economically backward, whose population does not enjoy modern medical and health facilities to the extent of the other two nations compared. The United Kingdom, an economically advanced country, enjoys the benefits of the National Health Service whereby the whole population receives modern medical attention; the statistics of this country being therefore particularly valuable. The United States represents a still more economically advanced nation which is facing, in addition, the full impact of large-scale industrialization.

For practical purposes it is being assumed that the differences exhibited in the tables between the conditions in Ceylon on the one hand and the two western nations on the other, largely arise from and reflect the higher nutritional standards and the better and more extensive medical and public health services of the western countries.

—(For Statistical table see next page)

STATISTICAL TABLE, SHOWING THE MAJOR CAUSES OF MORTALITY  
IN CEYLON, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES  
FOR THE YEARS 1948 AND 1949

	1948			1949		
	Ceylon	U.K.	U.S.	Ceylon	U.K.	U.S.
Total mortality rate*	1,322.5	1,080.2	989	1,259.3	1,183.2	971.7
Infectious and parasitic diseases	408.9	195.8	150.9	409.3	218.1	102.3
Neoplasms—malignant	13.0	182.8	134.9	13.6	193.0	138.9
Deficiency diseases	118.7	13.3	12.4	124.9	—	—
Diabetes	7.0	7.5	26.5	7.2	8.0	16.9
Cardiovascular (including intracranial vascular lesions)	46.9	353.8	346.2	73.1	384.7	444.2
Diseases of central nervous system	114.1	11.1	6.9	122.7	—	—
Suicides and homicides	10.6	—	17.0	10.8	11.5	16.8

\*Note: Total mortality rate is per 100,000 persons. Columns marked — indicate figures not available.

The Table extracted above indicates that the highest mortality is in Ceylon by the deficiency diseases and the infectious—parasitic group of diseases. In the other two countries, the deficiency group has been almost eliminated and the infectious markedly cut down. The probable reasons for this have been suggested already. But there is a considerable compensatory rise in the mortality due to malignant tumours and cardiovascular conditions. This phenomenon has been noted and discussed with anxiety by medical men of these countries. The increasing incidence of these disorders is attributed to such factors as the lengthening of life-span resulting in an aggregation of persons in the older age groups, the stress and strain associated with modern living conditions, the better diagnostic recognition of such disorders, etc. There is no doubt that these factors are really responsible to a large extent for the increase of these cases. Yet, it would amount to complacency if we were to satisfy ourselves with such facile interpretations. The incidence of cancers and coronaries, hysterias and hypertension, is definitely rising and this upward trend is not gradual and proportionate but sudden and alarming. Further, the cases of

allergy, psychosis and neurosis which are quite numerous and continue to multiply are not at all well-represented in these mortality tables for they rate very low as causes of mortality, though they are most disabling, distressing and depressing. Naturally, the serious student would be inclined to doubt if our progress is as correct and comprehensive as we would like to believe and if our Herculean efforts would produce correspondingly satisfactory results.

An analysis of the disorders that now predominate reveals that they are either the products of altered reactivity or a diminished capacity of adjustment. Allergy represents an altered sensitivity and a lack of adaptation so that the very stimuli that our body normally resist or assimilate, overcome it. Neurosis and psychosis represent an inability for adaptation in the mental and emotional planes. Man is highly adaptable and he develops immunity and tolerance to morbid influences in a remarkable way within a surprisingly short space of time. It would seem that now (whether in spite of or owing to modern drugs) this basic adaptability of man is breaking down and that his innate harmony is getting disturbed. Modern medicine, which so dramatically suppresses acute suffering, fails to restore and maintain the patient in this state of inner balance which we term health and which is exhibited by his well-being in the physical, mental and moral planes. Even the conception of health has been diluted and it has been accepted by many to mean an absence of acute or visible changes. Gradually, a state of physical acquiescence, mental disorganization and disintegration of personality has been permitted so that society now abounds with cripples, imbeciles and neurotics, of varying degree and kind, the sum total of their aberrations being reflected in the state of Society itself.

It is certain that this imperceptible but steady degeneration owes its origin to an incorrect approach and an improper handling of the question of health and disease. In the zealous attempts to uncover the ultimate causes of disease, too much attention has been focussed on tissue-pathology and an extraordinary amount of energy spent in studying the same. The microscope and the laboratory, which have claimed the exclusive attention

of medical men, have surely extended the depth of their vision but have narrowed the field of perception. This is an unfortunate development because tissue-changes are always the ultimates and are preceded by a stage of functional disorder in which stage they are far more easy to cure. Disease is basically a dynamic disturbance whatever the accompanying or ensuing tissue-pathology, and is recognizable only by the signs and symptoms evoked. Unless this is understood and the symptoms of the suffering individual considered as a whole wherein the knowledge obtained from the laboratory has been integrated and considered in the background of this whole symptomatology, we shall continue to fumble. To quote Carrel again :

"Disease consists of a functional and structural disorder. Its aspects are as numerous as our organic activities. There are diseases of the stomach, of the heart, of the nervous system, etc. But in illness the body preserves the same unity as in health. It is sickness as a whole. No disturbance remains strictly confined to a single organ. Physicians have been led to consider each disease as a specialty by the old anatomical conception of the human being. Only those who know man both in his parts and in its entirety, simultaneously under his anatomical, physiological and mental aspects, are capable of understanding him when he is sick."

Other enlightened men like Hughlings Jackson, Sir James McKenzie and Sir Russel Brain came to similar conclusions and have expressed themselves against the inanity of studying sick persons purely from the pathological angle but their followers are the fortunate few !

Modern surgery has to its credit many notable achievements. The scope of surgery has been widely extended and its techniques highly refined. Many daring and brilliant operative procedures are devised and carried out with gratifying success. But these dazzling results cannot blind us to the unpleasant realization that surgery often deals only with the end-products of pathogenic processes and that every incursion it makes is an additional evidence of the limitations and failure of medicine.

No attempt is made to belittle the efforts and achievements of the many great scientists like Koch and Lister, Pavlov and

Pasteur. They truly dedicated themselves to the cause of science and humanity but their discoveries have not been kept or utilized in the proper perspective nor has proper integration been achieved of such knowledge.

The increasing daily output of new and more powerful drugs capable of suppressing symptoms and palliating patients and the corresponding simultaneous rise in the incidence of chronic illnesses cannot be a mere coincidence. Every symptom is but one manifestation, one indication of a disorder and any attempt to suppress such single manifestations, without reference to the basic disturbance of which it is but a part or without any consideration of the whole individual who is suffering, is bound to fail miserably and further is likely to aggravate the suffering. Such a partial and symptomatic suppression would also deflect the disease-force inward so that a sub-clinical but persistent imbalance within the organism is sure to ensue, which in course of time would mutate into some deep-seated disease process.

The total inability of traditional medicine to appreciate that the organism is not merely the sum total of the organs but the sum total of the physical, mental and moral characteristics of the body—mind—spirit triune, is also major cause of its failure. If it is just realizing the enormous importance of the psyche—thanks to Dr. Freud and others—it has as yet failed to comprehend the moral element of man. To an enlightened clinician, a change in the personality of the patient as, e.g. a lack of human feeling ought to be as much a material symptom as an anxiety of the mind or a tumour in the body. Had such recognition been conferred, there would be a lesser following for faith-healers.

To the unbiased physician, in search of a therapeutic method that would restore the sick individual to a state of positive health, meaning thereby a state of balance in the physical, mental and ethical planes, Homœo-therapeutics offers the most satisfying answer. As against the parochial approach of orthodox medicine towards the sick, the attitude of Homœopathy offers a refreshing contrast. The sick individual is studied as a whole and his symptoms—all of them—assessed in their proper perspective. No symptom is ignored or devalued merely because

its pathological basis is obscure. The therapy does not rest upon the nosological labels of diseases for there is the constant risk of the classification being wrong and the label being treated instead of the basic disorder. Even advocates of traditional medicine are realizing that the naming or classifying of disease conditions on the basis of those symptoms which are outstanding, as in e.g. anæmia, asthma, hypertension, nephritis etc., is both unscientific and misleading. It is unscientific because the names do not indicate to us the cause, nature or extent of the underlying disturbance but only focus our attention on how or where the resulting changes are manifesting, and it is misleading because however prominent a symptom or however markedly a particular organ may be affected, it is but a part of a general disorder, a manifestation locally of a total turmoil of the whole organism, for the organism functions as a coherent and coordinate integer, so that it is impossible that one member should be sick while the others remain free.

The aspect of Homœopathy that has militated most against its acceptance by the conservative majority is the apparently irreconcilable procedure of administering doses in which the quantity of drug-substance is practically non-existent. Whereas this very fact, that the restoration of health is brought about by such infinitesimal doses which suffice to provide the necessary vital stimulus, ought to weigh heavily in its favour, yet the crudely material and antiquated beliefs of most modern physicians have proved the stumbling block. Seemingly, they are yet unaware of the findings of Einstein, that matter and energy are but different states of the same entity and that mass is transformable into an extraordinary amount of energy.\* The researches of Dr. Boyd have provided proofs of the activity of

\* As given by the famous equation  $E = mc^2$  where E representing the energy released is equal to the mass in grammes multiplied by the square of the velocity of light (c) expressed in centimetres per second (i.e. 29,46,24,00,000<sup>2</sup>)—the equation that has made the atom bomb possible! "This extraordinary relationship becomes more vivid when its terms are translated into concrete values: i.e. one kilogram of coal (about two pounds) if converted *entirely* into energy, would yield 25 billion kilowatt hours of electricity or as much as all the power plants in the U.S. could generate by running steadily for two months."

homœopathic potencies. Yet there are those who seeing will not see!

Any amount of evidence is available to prove that Homœopathy is most scientific and that it is very effective—sometimes magical in its efficacy. But the real criterion of any system of medical treatment is that it should consistently succeed in practice; and this criterion, Homœopathy can be depended upon to meet most satisfactorily. If the best convictions are those based on one's own experience, then the best way is to test Homœopathy in one's own practice. No one, who has tested Homœopathy in this way, has remained unconvinced. It is, therefore, most regrettable that the medical profession at large, with the avowed aim of rendering assistance to sick humanity by any and every means available, has failed even to put the claims of Homœopathy to a fair test and has thus cheated itself of a most useful method of drug-therapy. If Homœopathy served a purpose in the nineteenth century—the purpose of resurrecting medicine from the hands of butchers and unscientific quacks—it is absolutely needed now to deflect medicine from the path of unnecessary drugging and unneeded surgery, and to strengthen, in all its aspects, frail humanity, which is exposed to a thousand vicious influences—natural and artificial. Homœopathy presents the answer not only to the sick individual but also to sick humanity which is steadily advancing towards a state of material glory, mental perplexity and moral deterioration.

—*The British Homœopathic Journal, Oct., '57*

---