

A REPORT ON MOSCOW HOMOEOPATHIC CONFERENCE

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I had the opportunity of visiting the Soviet Union as an Indian delegate to attend the Soviet Homoeopathic Conference. It was because of *prestroika* that the Soviet homoeopaths could organise this gathering. It was held in a hall of The Academy of Science of the USSR, situated at Zvenigrodsky, about 80 km from Moscow.

In all, 350 delegates were present from all over the world. The countries from where the delegates came included the UK, Belgium, Sweden, France, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, India, Mexico, Brazil, the USA, Canada and Nigeria. Delegates from 40 cities of the Soviet Union also took part in the deliberations held from November 22 to 25.

The Soviet Union has two homoeopathic polyclinics, one in Moscow and the other in Leningrad. In Moscow there are four pharmacies which dispense homoeopathic medicines. Even in Leningrad's main avenue there is one homoeopathic pharmacy. To add to the awareness of the Russians about homoeopathy, there is a six-storey hospital in Moscow which has two floors exclusively for homoeopathic treatment. It has 120 beds and receives patients from all over the Soviet Union. There are 100 physicians and 300 other employees. Many specialities are represented, such as Paediatrics, Gynaecology and Psychiatry.

The Paediatrics Ward provides medicare to 65,000 children every year and 200 persons come to its outpatients section for consultation daily.

There are about 500 homoeopaths all over the Soviet Union. *Prestroika* has allowed the integration of interested parties into cooperatives. The Homoeopathic Hospital is about to obtain permission to become such a cooperative. After this the people behind the hospital have plans to obtain income for sponsoring conferences and inviting professors from abroad. In a society like that in the USSR too, homoeopathy has been recognised as

a medical science. Independent professional practice is also beginning here. Soviet homoeopathic doctors are keenly interested in the homoeopathic world outside their country. They, too, are of the opinion that human beings should be treated as a whole "being" and not by dividing the body into water-tight compartments or treating the human body as a mechanical machine. If medicine is prescribed on a few symptoms, the disease will go on playing guerilla warfare in the body and the physician is perplexed what to do.

We are indebted to Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homoeopathy, whose discovery is being accepted in the modern times. The principles of *similia*, *simplex* and *minimum* are not pushed off by the science of tomorrow. The science of homoeopathy is based on the principle of individualisation of each patient. A physician well-versed in homoeopathy bases the management of his patients on the fact that it is not that diseases catch people but it is people who catch diseases by becoming susceptible to the factors responsible for the disease. Now to weaken the natural immune system (natural defence mechanism) in an individual, numerous factors come into play. The homoeopath unearths these factors and bases his prescription on them, thereby setting right the individual's defence mechanism, which then fights out the disease as a healthy individual being.

Various papers were presented covering a variety of topics. The conference highlighted the different principles of homoeopathy. Doctors gave ample evidence, both documentary and illustrative, of homoeopathy being instrumental in the cure of illnesses like epilepsy, cerebrovascular accidents, hypertension, cardiac failure, chronic bronchitis, bronchial asthma, emphysema, rheumatoid arthritis, rheumatic fever, poliomyelitis, Indian childhood cirrhosis, nephrotic syndrome, ulcerative colitis and various forms of skin diseases.

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A delegate from Brazil highlighted in his paper the role of the physician in the management of the sick. He pointed out that the duty of the physician was to perceive the cause of the illness and not merely look with his senses aided by X-ray, ultrasound, scanning and clinical examination reports. The cause of the disease lies far behind in the emotional realm of the patient. The emotional disturbances he has been undergoing since infancy have been the cause of diseases. What is in one's mind is often quite literally and anatomically what is in one's body. Peptide messenger molecules manufactured by the brain and the immune system are the link. There are approximately 60 known peptide molecules in the body, including some with names familiar to us like endorphins, interleukins and interferon. They make feelings into chemicals and affect the link between the "psyche" and "soma".

In my scientific paper I laid stress on finding the cause of illness for the treatment of chronic disease afflicting adults and children. I pointed out that the cause of the illness had mainly two aspects: the physical aspect and the emotional aspect or mental aspect. The correct homoeopathic remedy is given by a doctor when he takes into account both aspects of the cause of the illness. Thus he is able to select a "single" medicine which sets right the patient's immune mechanism thereby rooting out the illness. Many doctors do take into account the physical aspect of the "cause". The mental or emotional aspects are neglected whereby the selection of the correct remedy eludes the physician.

The other advantage of finding out the mental or emotional cause is that the patient can be made aware of the factors which created the disease and by doing, so he can take part in removing the disease. With the help of the right homoeopathic medicine, the patient gets support with the medicine to change his thinking pattern. He can thus handle his feelings, he can find a solution for the conflicts in life, his anger, impatience, lack of confidence, depression all get well with the homoeopathic medicine.

There is much that doctors can do as individuals to activate or to impede the healing system, just as we can choose to confront the danger or close our eyes and ears to it. Patients should never be told that the disease is incurable and that they have to live with it. A delegate from Belgium emphasised that "hope is physiologic". He reminded us of Fritz of Capra, the physicist who wrote that studies had shown that a patient's response to the treatment depended more on his attitude than on the severity of the disease. Once the feeling of hope and anticipation are generated, the organism translates this into biological processes that begin to restore the balance

and revitalise the immune system, using the same pathways that were used in the development of the illness.

Hope is useful when things are hopeless. Hope and love are the most neglected remedies. Every generation has and always will have its threatening illnesses. If we find a cure for one, another takes its place. If we find a wonder drug for one, we must find another wonder drug for the next. We need, therefore, to focus not just on finding new "wonder drugs" but on teaching people how to utilise the naturally occurring "wonder drugs" which exist within each of us.

At the conference light was also thrown on how to tackle AIDS with homoeopathic medicines. Doctors came out with new homoeopathic medicines. Here I wish to say that though AIDS is incurable by the conventional medical system, homoeopathy is optimistic regarding the cure of this illness because in this science medicines are given to set right the patient's immune system, which then fights out the disease.

The Soviet Homoeopathic Conference gave ample evidence of the "deep rooted" principles of homoeopathy. The Soviet people recognise it as an efficient system of medicine both on paper and in practice. The science of homoeopathy is in harmony with the beliefs of great medical historians and the father of medicine, Hippocrates, who said: "I would rather know what sort of person has disease rather than what sort of disease a person has". Louis Pasteur and Claude Bernard, two medical giants of the nineteenth century, questioned all through their lives whether the most important factor in the case of a disease was the "soil"—the human body—or the "germ". On his death bed Pasteur admitted that Bernard had been right, declaring that it is the soil".

Dr. Alexander Solzhenytsin in his book "Cancer Ward" says: "The balance depends on the man's frame of mind! Understand? Which means that if he is cheerful and firm in spirit, there will be more sodium in the barrier and so sickness, none whatsoever will bring him to his death. But as soon as he loses heart, the potassium gains the upper hand and he might as well order himself a coffin."

Sir William Osler, a brilliant Canadian physician and medical historian of the 19th century, said that the outcome of tuberculosis had more to do with what went on in the patient's mind than what went on in his lungs.

The beliefs of these great physicians and of many more are sure to prosper and redeem humanity from the sea of suffering.