

NEW HEALTH GUIDANCE AND THE DYNAMICS OF FOOD

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New Health Guidance—I propose to talk this evening of doctors, in general, make a pointed reference to three of them and finally pass on to a detailed consideration of diet or food. We shall see the interconnection of these topics as we proceed. All medical systems and some of the philosophical ones too, have laid down directions for the physicians, either for the physicians themselves or for the physicians in relation to the patients. Some of these directions are very definite, peremptory and inviolate. They may affect the whole destiny of the patient, for good or for bad. For example, there is a very ancient saying, which says "Physician heal thyself". This is a kind of rule as well as a warning, and has some sort of philosophical meaning. It is, however, rarely heard or heeded to nowadays. A more recent one is from Hahnemann, much easier to understand and one which we cannot afford to ignore. It says "Treat the patient and not the disease." This, you will surely agree, is a very crucial rule, and the success or failure of a case does rest upon its observance or otherwise. Again, there is one of the opening articles of "Organon" which enjoins the physician to bring about enduring restoration of health by the quickest, most trustworthy, and least harmful way.

And so on; there are many more such rules.

Need for Health Counselling—Is not it rather curious that among all the medical and philosophical treatises, as far as I know, no words have been addressed directly to the patients? It is as if the patients were not deemed fit to listen to any advice. The poor lambs were supposed to follow only the commands or whims of the doctors. Now, I have a few comments to offer in this regard. First, patients of today are maturer and sometimes as well educated as the physician. Secondly, the division between doctors and patients is after all not very sacrosanct. The same person may be, and often is both a physician and a patient. And finally, for a quick and enduring cure, the patients should play a more positive and intelligent role. By remaining passive recipients of drugs, homœopathic or otherwise, will not take them to the goal of normalcy by the shortest route. And for this purpose, patients require health counselling in the same way as youngmen at the threshold of life require vocational guidance. As it is, many people become aware of the importance of health and of the factors that go towards the making of it only after a long travail, that is, after they have had a round of scores of hospitals and spent a lot of money and time in undergoing treatment under various systems. I think, lack of proper health guidance is a very serious desideratum which requires to be remedied as early as possible. By proper health

guidance, I do not mean hygienic and prophylactic measures. These we have in plenty.

Patient, Heal Thyself—Such being the case, you will forgive some presumptuousness on my part, if I present to you a couple of rules out of my own invention, meant for the patients. The first of these is, "Patient, heal thyself". This rule, even if it is an imitation of its prototype about the physician, is, in fact, neither cheap nor meaningless. It can be and should be taken seriously. It means that the patient or would-be patient should understand his own health and disease process and take measures accordingly, reverting within medicines or physicians. That is, he should review all his activities of the day from eating on to his professional work, rest and recreation, etc. and readjust them towards health. "Patient heal thyself" does not mean as soon as he is ill, he should run to the nearest dispensary or his chemist to get some well-advertised drug.

The Second Rule—Often, it is not possible to avoid physicians altogether. For such a situation, there is my second rule, which says, "*Choose the doctor, and not the medicine.*" Many patients, especially the educated ones, have got to know of many medicines, and carry them and use them very frequently. For example, a person with a headache most often goes in for aspirin, instead of to a doctor. According to my rules, he should have first tried to heal himself without the aid of drugs. He should have tried to find out the causes of the disorder by a review of his doings, and should have readjusted his activities accordingly. Failing that, he should have chosen a doctor, who could have helped him in doing this, and not merely prescribed another brand of anodyne. It is my submission that this rule, "Choose the doctor, and not the medicine" embraces all physicians and all systems. For, there are places in the world, where there is no choice of systems at all. Here, one should try to find the one physician out of the many who comes up most nearly to the Hahnemannian definition. But what about those places, where there are no physicians at all? Surely, you know that very large areas of our globe are free from these blessed creatures, the physicians, but not free from diseases.

The Three Doctors—It is in such a dismal situation like this that I propose to introduce my three doctors. These three doctors were those from the dawn of human life and they are there in all countries and climes. *They are "Dr. Diet, Dr. Quiet, and Dr. Merryman."* If you give but a little thought to it, you will agree readily that good food, correct eating, a quiet and relaxed life, and a modicum of merriment go a long way towards the recovery of health. Out of these universal doctors, I shall exclusively deal with the first one only—namely, Diet, for, as I shall try to bring out, diet or food is one of the most important factors in the restoration and maintenance of health.

The Dynamics of Diet—Our present knowledge about this subject is mostly grouped under two headings. The layman, even among the educated, is acutely conscious of the 'hot' and 'cold', 'dry' and 'wet' effects of

various items of dietary. This is due to a vague following of the Ayurvedic or Unani lines of therapeutics. The second group consists of the so-called modern physicians and the more knowledgeable among the people who try to follow the chemical classification of food as given in the modern textbooks. I do not propose to comment on the first way of thought, that is, the one connected with the Ayurvedic theory. It is a complex matter and cannot be isolated from the whole philosophical concept of which it is a part. I shall, rather, take cudgels with the second, the more modern and the more powerful group in the field of dietetics. To be able to drive in my points more forcefully, I shall base my arguments on the scientific data derived from the same source from which all modern diet and allopathic research derives its conclusions, that is, the rat and guinea-pig laboratories. I shall begin by referring to an experiment made about 30 years ago in a Food Laboratory in India and by quoting rather extensively from the speech of its Director, Sir Robert McCarrison.

McCarrison's Experiment—Sir Robert McCarrison was a British Army Doctor. He was engaged in recruiting soldiers from various part of India for the First World War. In the course of their physical check up he noticed difference in health and body-fitness among persons of different provinces. At the same time, he noticed clear demarcations in their dietary. These two—the difference in body-fitness and in diet—put together prompted him to conduct experiments on rats. He fed them with the items of foods which are taken by Panjabis, Pathans, Bengalis, Madrasis, etc. So gratified was he with the results of the test that he got immensely interested in the whole question of food. He managed to establish the first Government of India Nutritional Research Laboratory at Coonoor in South India of which he became its first Director. In a farewell address, read by him in Madras in 1935, he summed up his achievements thus:

“My work has been to learn how diseases arise, and in particular how perfect food is concerned in keeping the body in perfect condition; and *per contra*, how imperfect food is concerned in causing it to work inefficiently and in consequence to go sick.

“In Coonoor, where my laboratories are located under conditions of the most perfect hygiene. I keep about 1,000 stock rats for my experimental work. They live in large, roomy, comfortable cages filled with straw, and they are exposed daily to the sun's rays. This stock is fed on a diet similar to that eaten by certain races of northern India, among whom are to be found some of the finest physical specimens of mankind. . . During the past four years, there has been no case of illness amongst these rats, no deaths from the natural causes in the adult stock. . . Disease has been excluded almost completely.

“Turning to my experimentation rooms, here are the same animal houses, the same cages, the same scrupulous cleanliness, the same exposure to the sun's rays. But the animals are fed on food which is faulty in one way

or another. Further, as my business is to learn how the foods eaten by the people of India are related to disease, I know that the materials entering into the various faulty dietaries are usually those in use by people in India.

"During the last four years, over 3,000 of these improperly-fed rats have been examined after death; that is to say, during the same period in which the well-fed rats remained so free from disease. The following are the morbid states we found amongst them: Pneumonia, and other diseases of lung; diseases of the nose and the passages leading from it; diseases of the eye, which may lead to actual blindness; diseases of the stomach and intestines, such as inflammation of the bowels and ulcers; stone in the bladder; premature birth in the mother's womb; diseases of the skin, such as loss of hair, dermatitis, and abscesses; anaemia; dropsy; enlarged glands; goitre; neuritis; beriberi; diseases of the heart.

"There is another regard in which the ill-fed rats differ from the well-fed ones; the former are often nervous, irritable, and, if they live together in colonies, the stronger often prey upon the weaker; the well-fed ones are placid, good tempered, and tractable."

This is the experiment and these are the findings in the doctor's own words. The experiment, you will see, is very important—as important—as the peruvian bark episode in the life of Dr. Hahnemann. It brought out some amazing results, for not only the so-called deficiency diseases but almost a whole host of pathogenesis, including temperamental aberrations, seem to have originated from the only controlling factor which was food. Many of the disease conditions, you will notice, were outside the category of vitamin-deficiency diseases. Some of these are officially caused by germs. Unfortunately, no further enquiry was made into this strange phenomenon. The results obtained could have well led to some honest questioning, and ultimately to the pricking of the germ theory. I do not propose to go into elaborate explanations for this desideratum on the part of the official medical tribe. It is a fact, however, that the chemico-physical concept of life is in itself a great barrier to any true enquiry concerning living organisms. At the time of Dr. McCarrison, the current rage were vitamins. And even though vitamins, or the lack of vitamins, together with mineral deficiency could not adequately explain the new findings, the matter was not pursued. To this day it lies buried, while the research workers in food laboratories are frantically busy hunting for more vitamins.

The True Concept of Health and Disease—To us, however, McCarrison's experiment will make a lot more sense. In fact, it will rise to its full measure of significance to all those who dispossess themselves of the chemical concept of life. The body is not a mere crucible wherein chemical substances react one with another. Diseases are not isolated troubles, located in different organs of the body, subject to chemical or biochemical law alone. There is a life principle, which animates the phenomena of health and disease in the living organism. I am merely restating your own views. This

fundamentally different approach has a logical conclusion which should make us realize that the guiding principles for selection of food lie elsewhere than in the usual diet manuals. It should make us see that the supply of so many calories, so many grammes of protein, and so many international units of vitamins ranging from A to Z per day, is mere child-play in the grand scheme of health restoration or health maintenance. And in practice, we do see this, although we fight shy of...acknowledging it. How many of us, in good health, are taking food by measurement. Do you have weighing balances at the table and get your helping of curry and rice, weighed each time? An honest study of the more healthy and long-lived around us will tell you any day that their food habits do not conform to any formulae laid down in the text-books—no, not by a long yard! The first step in the understanding of the importance of food is thus to discard the chemical basis of its role. But after having done it, do we have any guiding principles? Or we are left behind groping in dark? Is there any adequate scientific explanation for the dynamic role of food? Do we have any concrete criteria in the realm of food similar to those of the proved medicines and their potentiation in the field of homœopathy? We shall try to find.

A Philosophy of Food—It happens that attempts had been made, long before Sir McCarrison arrived at the scene, to find these guiding dynamic principles. And over a number of years, extending to well over a century, some very significant headway has been made. We have come to possess a set of sound principles, which, if followed, lead to the restoration of health. McCarrison's experiment was important in that it was a laboratory confirmation of them. These tenets of food versus health open up a new vista, really a new philosophy of food, as fascinating, refreshing and rewarding as the philosophy of homœopathy. But before I proceed to give an outline of it, I would repeat my plea that we stick to the fundamentally different approach to the whole question—the same approach which distinguishes and differentiates homœopathy from allopathy—the attitude of looking at living organism as a complete and whole entity, not in parts or combination of parts. Also, we shall remember its corollary that disease is not something alien or extraneous, imported into the human body and ascribable to bacteria and viruses. In fact it is a diminution in health due to disturbance in the vital principle. If we could use food as an aid to the vital principle, we shall have health instead of disease.

The Governing Law of Diet—*The governing law of the philosophy of food is that food is also a tax or drain on energy.* It saps a sizable portion of energy which otherwise would be available as aid to the vital principle. This point is worth-labouring a little more. Food manufactures blood for the body, but it requires blood from the same source for its own digestion, and digestion as we should all know does not stop at the small intestines. The elimination of waste products or detoxication, is an essential feature or a necessary evil, if you please. This unpleasant epilogue to the pleasant ritual of

eating, eliminatory side, is a very very important aspect of the whole issue. It consumes a huge chunk of energy which ultimately leads to the depletion or disturbance of the vital principle. We see therefore, that merely taking rich food, according to any formula, which does not take into account such important considerations as elimination, is the beginning and not the end of diseases. The complete digestion of food postulates elimination as its very essential without which the truth about the philosophy of food will remain ever shrouded in the dark.

THE CRITERIA OF FOOD SELECTION

The real criteria which should, thus, be employed in the choice of foods and in the manner of eating, *should aim at energy-saving*. The validity of the criteria, some of which I am going to put forward, is fairly obvious, and do not involve any elaborate technique in their application. The *first criterion is the test of elementary Vs. concentrated foods*. We know that food has to be reduced to elementary substances by the metabolic process before it can be assimilated in the human body. Carbohydrates have to be reduced to glucose, sucrose, lactose, etc., etc. Fats have to be reduced to fatty acids and glycerine; proteins into amino-acids. A concentrated food will, thus, take away more energy in digestion than will a simple food. Simpler foods will involve less processing, and even though the resultant energy may not be much, there will be overall saving, which, in fact, is the more important thing. 'Mauva' or 'Rabri' for example is compounded from milk which, in turn, is produced by the cattle out of vegetables and herbs. The first is more concentrated than the second, the second is more concentrated than the third. The net result in each case would be in proportion to its concentration. Vegetables and herbs will score the most on health-restoring grounds.

The Second Test, as I have already explained, *is that of elimination*. Some foods, after digestion, leave waste products which are difficult to eliminate. Imperfect elimination leaves such toxins in the body as are a constant source of local or general irritation and energy consumption, resulting in violent repercussions. Meat, for example, is not only very concentrated, but also its waste products are not easily and fully eliminated and are highly toxic.

For the *third test*, I am propounding a point which could as well have been the summum bonum of the philosophy of food. It is the test of *living Vs. dead food*. Life is sustained through life. No one has heard of the dead growing. The test of a living food is that it should be in the process of growth, and when severed from its living body should decline and decay. Living food is short-lived. A dead food, on the other hand, is that which has reached the end of its existence. It can be stored for long periods. Jaggery or brown sugar is more living for it goes bad if kept for a long period. White sugar is dead food for it can be stored for months, almost like stones. Again, the living foods, like fresh vegetables and fruit have their original colour,

flavour and sleekness. Not so, the denuded and denatured food, and these can hardly be conducive to healthy life. Eggs and flesh of animals can be categorised as living foods (and they are doubtless invaluable for the same reason); but on account of their concentration and toxic nature, their value is more than set-off on other grounds.

The *fourth criterion* is one which is glibly talked about a lot, but improperly understood by many medical practitioners on both sides. This is the question of *acid-forming vs. alkali-forming of foods*.

"The human body represents a precarious organisation of matter." I am quoting from an article by Dr. H. G. Menkel, reproduced in "Diet and Diet Reforms" by M. K. Gandhi. "Chemical study of body materials reveals eighty parts alkali and twenty parts acid. This relationship of four to one is the basic secret of health, normal functional activities and efficient old age."

Excess of acidity in the body or acidosis puts a heavy demand on the alkali reserve from the body tissues, and lowering of that reserve even by a slight degree causes localised irritation, pain and inflammation, in the form of rheumatism, neuritis, arthritis, myalgia, fibrositis, lumbago and many other similar conditions. In fact, in all ill-health, generally, the acid alkali imbalance is at the root of the trouble, directly or indirectly. Daily intake of alkali-forming foods is, therefore, one of the most essential principles for health maintenance or health-restoration. Now, foods are classified as acid-forming or alkali-forming according to their particular mineral content. Minerals which favour acidity are phosphorous, sulphur, silicon, chlorine, fluorine, iodine, arsenic and bromine. The alkali-forming minerals are potassium, sodium, calcium, magnesium, iron manganese, aluminium, copper, lithium, zinc and nickel.

It happens that almost all the so-called rich foods are acid-forming, including meat, eggs, fish as also cereals contained in bread, dal, nuts, refined sugar and sweets, coffee and tea, vanaspati ghee, boiled milk and alcoholic drinks. The alkali-forming foods consist mainly of all green vegetables and nearly all fruits, as also raw milk. Some of the foods like butter are neutral but things fried in ghee would be acid-forming.

My *fifth point* is not directly connected with the choice of food. It concerns the *habit of eating*. The complete process of digestion, from ingress to egress, takes approximately from 18 to 24 hours. This period can be roughly divided into 6/8 hours each for its processing in the stomach, the small intestines including the duodenum, and the large intestines. This machinery starts automatically as soon as even a small eatable grain is ingested, and makes the mill run for 18/24 hours. If say, within 6 hours of eating, we eat or drink again, however little, we have provided grist to the mill for another 18/24 hours. And that is what we generally do, with the result that the whole digestive system is on round the clock duty, which goes on and on without break or recess, from day to day, month to month, and in many cases from

cradle to grave. It does not require an experiment or apparatus to prove that this constant working of the digestive machinery, with no rest for recuperation, tells upon its efficiency and even its organic structure. The muscles lose their tone and the nerve and blood-supply ends are clogged, producing anything from dyspepsia, appendicitis, heart-burn and peptic ulcers on to other serious conditions which are generally but wrongly ascribed to extraneous causes. It is, therefore, essential that the digestive machinery should be given adequate rest. The no-breakfast plan of the modern diet specialists, and the periodical fasts of our traditional way of living are pointers to this fact.

These five points namely the test of elementary vs. concentrated foods, the test of easy elimination, the test of living vs. dead foods, the test of alkali-forming vs. acid-forming foods, as also the desirability of having about 6 hours complete interval between two eatings, are some of the salient rules of the new philosophy of food. These are not at all comprehensive. I have selected them simply as illustrative of the importance of food in health and as typical of a practical approach towards its utilisation for this purpose. They are parts of the measures which a patient can take in treating himself.

Foods thus selected may not make a body more plump; but who, except the ignorant, would equate plumpness with health? Foods thus selected may make a person wiry and light, but he will be agile, alert, cheerful and active, and these, latter, surely are the true signs of health. His weight may not measure up strictly to the height-weight-age chart, but we all know the value of those charts.

The Application of the Criteria—One word more. It is very re-assuring to note that the criteria outlined here are not mutually exclusive. That is to say, the food or class of foods which passes one criterion generally passes all other criteria, so that the task of choice is rendered very easy. That one class of food, broadly speaking, is vegetables, especially green leafy vegetables. Fruits come as close runners-up. This, it should be noticed, is a broad generalisation, and is true on the whole. But the problem of diet-prescription like homœopathic treatment requires individualisation with reference to age, state of health, tastes, climate, and, of course, one's pocket. Even of vegetables, persons have strong idiosyncracies, as you all ought to know. Vegetables generally disagree with patients of *Ars.*, *Ig.*, *Nat. C.*, *Nux Vom.* and *Sepia*. Cabbage would disagree with *Bry.*, *Carbo. Veg.*; *Kali C.*; *Lyco.*; and *Petroleum*. Onions make trouble to patients of *Brom.*; *Lyco.* and *Thuja*. Similarly, other items of food, like milk, fruits, cheese, etc., upset particular patients. The golden principle of diet prescription like the law of similars of homœopathy, is that the food after the process of digestion and detoxication should leave a credit balance in the energy account.

Diet Therapy—Ladies and gentlemen, this, in brief, is the account of our worthy Dr. Diet. I may as well let you know that his is an exclusive practice also. It is claimed that by diet-therapy alone, almost all diseases

can be cured. In that therapy, as in homœopathy, diseases disappear in the reverse order of their original onset, the cure is from above downwards from within outwards, and what may be new to you, from the back to the front, and from left to the right. Let us, however, not transgress into that territory. It is enough to know that the principles of the two doctors—Diet and Homœopathy—have much in common. Both impinge upon the dynamics of man. It is only meet that they should both collaborate with each other. Like the explorer Stanley discovering the pioneer Livingstone in the heart of Africa, let dynamic homœopathy meet dynamic diet and take off their hats to each other and shake hands. "Well met, Sir, Thank you."

—*Torch of Homœopathy, Jan., '63*

NOTICE

(1)

As usual, the next April Issue of **Hahnemannian Gleanings** will be published as the **Hahnemann Number**. Our learned writers are requested to send, immediately, erudite articles on the various aspects of the life and direct teachings of our Great Master or his disciples. Please remember that the last date for receiving such articles is 31.1.66. Kindly heed the following points before sending your article:

(2) The articles must be legibly written or preferably typed, on single face of half foolscap paper, with double space and sufficient margin.

(2) All quotations must be provided with reference of the source—the name of the book with its edition and page number.

(3) The matter must be thoroughly revised before being sent to us.

Of course, all these stipulations apply to all matters sent for publication in this Journal. Noncompliance with any of them may prevent us from publishing the matter.

(2)

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