

## IDEAS OF INTEGRATION AS A PROCESS OF EVOLUTION OF INDIAN SYSTEM OF MEDICINE IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

S. K. MISHRA, B. R. BHATTA, P. S. N. BHAT AND R. B. DWIVEDI

Department of Kayachikitsa  
Institute of Postgraduate Teaching and Research  
Gujarat Ayurveda University  
Jamnagar 361 001

The idea of integration in the systems of science and philosophy has been the original approach of Āyurveda. The actual credit of making active integration in Āyurveda should, to start with, go to Cakrapānidatta, Śārṅgadhara and the many contemporary scholars who supervened over the controversy of the Kaṣṭhaśadhi Vaidyans and the Rasavaidyans in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

A great deal of interaction was there between the sources of Arab, Greek, Egyptian and other systems of medicine including Chinese whose ideas were modified by Buddhism. Unani system is nothing but the integrated system of medicine of those days which was named as such and is a blend of Āyurveda, Arab and the Greco Roman medicine.

### INTRODUCTION

“A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an *idea* lives on, Ideas have endurance without death”.

*John. F. Kennedy*

In the light of the above idea about the ideas as such, if we analyse the problems we can have a more fruitful analysis. The whole purpose of the efforts directed to the studies of history of medicine, is to get an impetus from the past and also fix the proper dates and credits to proper authorities who have originated the ideas initially, because then and then only the truth of the above saying can be realised.

Coming to our subject of the historical background of the integrated approach towards the knowledge, teaching and practice of medicine, it is a futile process to negate it. In the original Āyurvedic aphorisms themselves starting straight from the *Atharvaveda* and later there are sufficient indications that Āyurveda had not only regards for the different schools of thought, it indulged in knowing teaching and practising them as and when required without any feeling of discrimination.

This may be regarded as one of the important reasons that Āyurveda reached climax, of course, if we shed off the prejudices regarding its divinity and all perfection. There has been a considerable churning of different thoughts of even entirely different disciplines only indirectly related to Āyurveda, just to evolve a truly utilitarian method, idea or principle beneficial in the efforts of alleviating the sufferings of the ailing humanity.

#### CONTROVERSIES AND EVOLUTION THROUGH THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Before the period of Buddha the Āyurvedic system of medicine was probably confined to the Indian territories when it started spreading beyond the frontiers along with religion for which there are sufficient evidences.

The records of certain medical historians do not give due consideration to the creditable position of Āyurvedic developments and the Egyptian papyrus (Kahun papyrus, Edwin-it-Smith papyrus, Ebers papyrus) get the credit of earliest records though there are ample evidences that Āyurveda has been a route for the development of the Arabic Medical Sciences and it is said that Arab imported it from India and exported to Europe,<sup>1</sup>

After the Buddhist period, during the seventh and eighth centuries the development of metallic compounds as a separate speciality had already taken place and lot of the development in the surgical skill was lost due to the Buddhist influence. However, upto the tenth century Nāgārjuna had already made the impact and there was a great success on his part to have scored over the conventional herbal medicines. The supplementation of the conventional herbal medicines with the metallic compounds and its acceptance may be cited as the early idea of integration. The two, though not foreign to each other, their basic philosophies were entirely different. In the same way the interaction between foreign and Indian systems of philosophy and medicine also took place.

Cakrapāṇidatta, the learned commentator of the eleventh century, very well known for his commentary on Caraka, (though has done commentary on other *Samhitās* also) wrote a medical treatise of his own named *Cakaradatta* and at this stage included the metallic compound and such other inorganic remedies and the organometallic complexes. In the opinion of the authors this was the beginning of the idea of integration for the evolution of Āyurveda in particular and medicine in general.

#### INTERACTION BETWEEN ĀYURVEDA AND ARAB MEDICINE

In the eighth century itself Haroon-al-Rashid having convinced himself of the advanced stage of science in India established a full fledged institute of transla-

tion of books. This was to take the essence from every prevalent system just to build up a national system of their own. It is also a wrong notion that the Arab's medical system is based on Greek ideas only but was evolved on Indian line of thinking (Jadon, Jury in *History of Islamic culture*).<sup>2 3</sup>

Indian physicians named Mank, Ayan, Dhan and Saleh reached the courts of caliphs at Baghdad in eighth and ninth centuries. Mank treated the caliph and cured. Saleh treated Ibrahim, a cousin of Haroon-al-Rashid and saved him from death. Thirteenth century Muslims learnt Indian languages and patronised the development of Indian Arts and Science. There was a great interplay between the unani medical literature that they brought with them and that existing in the Āyurvedic treatises. This is evidenced by the differences in the versions of the Persian literature preserved at Persia and Unani medical literature written in Arabic by Indian Muslims. It was this period when the real harmonious interaction of the scientific thoughts of the medical scientists from different disciplines took place and this is evidenced in the Āyurvedic literatures created during this period like that by Śārṅgadhara and it was at this stage that the primary importance to the examination of pulse (*nāḍi*) was started to be given though there are Sanskrit Manuscripts available attributed to Rāvaṇa, Agniveśa and Hārīta. The effect of the unani medicine in the contemporary Āyurvedic thoughts and vice versa may be taken as a positive evidence of the idea of integrated medicine during that period which is maintained till date amongst the Rajasthan vaidyas. The use of drugs like *ahiphena*, *akarkarā*, *utnsana* came to Āyurveda through unani medicine which may be taken as concrete examples to this contention.

Al-barmaica said to be originally Buddhist from Kashmir (Nadavi 1970) propagated Indian systems of medicine in Persia and the regards that he possessed for this is evidenced by the fact that Indian medical officers were appointed in senior capacities in his hospitals. There are evidences of Arab delegations coming to India to learn Indian medicine and do research on Indian herbs. The names mentioned in connection with the initiation of these ideas are caliph Moafeaq Billah, Khalid Bermaki and caliph Muatas Billah who sent Ahmad Khafi Dalmi to do research on the prevalent medicines in India.

During the fourteenth century a manuscript was composed in Telangana by Muhammad bin Tughlaq (1313 A.D.) which contains 46 chapters and the 41st chapter is entirely on the Indian sources for the calcination of mercury, gold, silver, copper etc. taken directly from Nāgārjuna and other Yogeśwaras. In 1389 A.D. Tibba-Ma-Shehabi was compiled during the times of Shihab Abdul Karim Nagori—the ruler of Gujrat.

During the fifteenth century Mahmood Shah I, the grandson of Ahmad Shah, who founded Ahmedabad got *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya* translated into Persian by the name

*Tibb- $\alpha$ -Shifa* Mahmood Shahi. The translation was made by Hakim Ali Muhammad bin Ali Ismaili Asaveli (1473 A.D.).

In the sixteenth century Mianbhowa, a noble of Sikander Lodi (1512 A.D.), prepared *Maden-ush-Shifa Sikander Shahi* which was based on more than thirteen authoritative works of Āyurveda like Caraka, Suśruta, Bhela, Bhoja, Rasaratnākara, Śārṅgadhara, Vaṅgasena, Cintāmani, Mādhava Nidāna, Cakradatta. The very first chapter is on Āyurveda which has as much as 13 Sections. This is sufficient evidence of the importance attached to it. This can not be taken only as a translation and should be regarded as a work on real integrated medicine<sup>3,4</sup>.

Madanavinoda compiled by Rājāmadan in 1375 A.D. was translated by the name of Destoorul Hunood in Persian. This translation was done by Amanullah bin Mehabat Khan, the famous Marshal of Akbar and Jehangir (1633 A.D.).

The reason cited is to impart additional knowledge to the incomers to live in the changed circumstances. This is yet another evidence of integration of thought in medicine<sup>5,6,7</sup>.

During this very period Bhāvaprakāśa is said to have been written whose date has been decided on the basis of the description of *Phiraṅg Rogu* and *Chobchini* being used for its treatment which must have been imported around 1533 through the Portuguese invasions<sup>8</sup>. This treatise of Āyurveda has many inclusions over and above the existing tradition of Āyurveda. It was only because of the liberal permission and a need based urge on the part of the Muslim rulers of India in the medieval period that they could develop their original system of medicine which evolved to a great deal deriving knowledge from Āyurveda which gradually came to be known as the Unani system of medicine in India. Unani system of India is nothing but an integrated national system of medicine being a blend of the Indian system of medicine, i.e. Āyurveda and that of Arabs medicine which was the original that they brought with them. This helped both Āyurveda and Arabic medicine to help each other at the same time avoid any controversy at the state level.

#### STAGNATION IN THE PROCESS OF EVOLUTION

With the supremacy of the British rule in our country stagnation had set in the field of Āyurveda and the state did not give any patronage and tried to hush it off as unscientific and that is why Āyurveda gradually started loosing the grip over the contemporary developments of science<sup>9</sup>. This was a deliberate attempt to denigrate the science though they utilised every bit of Āyurveda and at the same time created such an atmosphere that Āyurveda does not touch modern science. This was a part of their policies at large as they did in every sphere to increase the gap between the caste and creed. The unfortunate part of the story

is its perpetuation by those who are overwhelmed by them. The reason for them in those days as well as now was to tighten their grip.

### CONCLUSION

The aforementioned facts give us sufficient clues that the idea of integration in the medical thoughts is nothing new and the process had started much earlier and the medieval period was the Golden period of Integration in the field of medicine and it was a part of the British Supremacy in the world that they did not allow it as they know it fully well that credits will go to someone else by doing so. It is not only necessary to correct the History of Medicine but also to take the lessons from the corrected version.<sup>10</sup>

### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Nadavi, S. E. A. Influence of Indian medical science on the Arabs in the Abbaside period. *Proceedings of Seminar cum workshop on "History of medicine in India"* pp. 38-43. 1970.
- <sup>2</sup> Sharma, P. V., *Ayurveda ka Vajnanik Itihasa*, Chowkhambha Orientaca, Varanasi (1975).
- <sup>3</sup> Azeez Pasha, M., Unani medical literature of India. *Proceedings of Seminar cum-Workshop on History of Medicine in India—Tirupati*. 1970.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibn Abi Usaiba. Sources of information in classes of Physicians (1243-44 A. D.).
- <sup>5</sup> Fleinders Petrie, W. N. *Some Sources of Human History*. Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge. London. 1919.
- <sup>6</sup> Clencing, L., *Source Book of Medical History*. Paul-H-Hoover Inc. (New York—London) (1942).
- <sup>7</sup> Rama Rao, B. Sanskrit manuscripts as source material for the history of Āyurveda. *Proceeding of seminar on History of Medicine in India*. 1970. pp. 25-29.
- <sup>8</sup> Vidyalkankar, Atrideva. *Āyurveda ka vrhat Itihasa*, Chowkhambha, Varanasi (1957).
- <sup>9</sup> Banh, D. B. Influence of Western Medicine in Vietnam. *J. Hist. Med. and Allied Science* VII: 1, pp 79-84. 1952.
- <sup>10</sup> Reddy, D. J., Inaugural address of the seminar on the History of Medicine in India. *Tirupati*. 1970.