

NATURAL LIFE AND NATURE CURE

By

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Shri Justice D. M. Chandrasekhar, former Chief Justice of the High Court of Karnataka State, was invited to deliver the Founder's Day address in August 1988. He chose for his subject Natural Life and Nature Cure.

This valuable paper is now printed to enable all persons who read it that there is an immense need today for everyone to try and live a life which is in consonance and harmony with Nature.

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NATURAL LIFE AND NATURE CURE

D. M. Chandrashekhar

For happiness of man, health is the major contributing factor. Without health so amount of wealth or material comforts can bring him happiness. For success in any walk of life, "good health is essential. Even for spiritual pursuit, health is necessary. That is why our Rishis devised and practiced *Yoga*. According to the old adage health is wealth.

Health is not merely absence of disease and infirmity. Health is something positive. Health is harmony of body and mind. Health shows itself in a radiant face, beauty in figure, feeling of lightness of body, appropriate weight of the body, capacity for work, ability to recover from fatigue by rest alone, faculty to rest whenever rest is required, temperance, cheerfulness of mind, contentment and subservience of the mind and the senses to the spirit within.

As the old proverb says, prevention is better than cure. It is better to follow the rules of good health and be healthy than to fall ill and then get cured. By remaining healthy, we are saved not only of the suffering during illness but also of money, time and trouble involved in getting treatment for illness.

To be healthy is natural and to be unhealthy is unnatural. Animals and birds in forests are generally always healthy, cheerful and lively. They very rarely fall ill. But, we men who call ourselves as civilised, have moved away from nature. Our material progress and sophistication have resulted in loss of health and suffering from numerous diseases.

Natural life or natural hygiene means living in harmony with nature and thereby being healthy.

The requisites for good health according to natural hygiene, are fresh air, pure water, sunshine, food, bodily exertion or exercise, rest, elimination of bodily wastes and calmness of mind. The first three of these requisites namely, air, water and sunshine are provided by nature. The fourth requisite, namely, food is also provided by nature though human effort is also involved in getting food.

Air and sunshine are sources of vital energy to our body. Though God has given air and sunshine in plenty and free, they are becoming scarce on account of our civilisation. Due to overcrowding, congestion and poor ventilation in the areas where we live and work we do not get adequate air and sunshine. Further, the air we breath is heavily polluted- by industries and 'automobiles as well as by insanitary conditions in human habitation. Polluted air is responsible for many diseases.

Gandhiji was a great votary of Natural Hygiene and Nature Cure. His small book, "Key to Health", is still a classic on Natural Hygiene and Nature cure. He has advised that persons who live or work in areas where there is no pure air, should go daily to places where pure air is available and spend there an hour or two.

Most of us do not take adequate quantity of air because our breathing is shallow. Our lungs ordinarily take only 50 to 60 per cent of their full capacity for air. Vigorous bodily exertion or exercise will increase our intake of air. If we develop the habit of deep breathing we get more vital energy from air.

If we expose our body or most parts of it directly to sun's rays for about 15 minutes a day, we get vital energy and our health will improve.

Water like air, is a necessity of life. For good health one should drink about 8 glasses of

water a day. Drinking a glass of water before going to bed and drinking a glass of water in the morning (called *usha pane*) before taking any food or other drink, will cleanse the body and will facilitate easy movement of bowels.

Contaminated water is responsible for a wide range of diseases.

Hippocrates, the father of medical science, said that your food should be your medicine and your medicine should be your food. Nature generally provides us food containing all the nourishment required for our body. Unfortunately the desire of man to wrest from land more food, has led to the use of large quantities of chemical manure in agriculture. When chemical manure is used to raise crops, use of pesticides becomes inevitable. Food that we get with the aid of chemical manures and pesticides, is not only less nourishing but also ' carries contamination of pesticides.

In America and Western European countries there are what are known as organic farms wherein food crops are grown using only green manure and farm yard manure and without using pesticides. The yield of crops in these farms will not be so high as in farms using chemical manures and pesticides. But, there are people who are prepared to pay higher prices for food grown in organic farms because such food will be more nourishing and free from contamination of pesticides.

The nourishing food given by nature, is devitalised by us by subjecting it to processing, refining and cooking. Milling of paddy and polishing rice, converting wheat into maida, converting sugar-cane juice to refined sugar, refining edible oils and hydrogenating them, will destroy a good part of the nourishing constituents in food. Over-cooking and frying will further destroy the nourishing part of food. Especially frying destroys the food value almost completely. Fried food is also difficult to digest. White bread, cakes, bun, biscuits, white sugar, bottled, tinned and packed food are generally dead food having lost vital elements in them.

Most of the soft drinks sold in the market- are prepared out of chemicals and have mere flavour of fruits. These soft drinks have no nutritive value. Many of them are positively harmful because they contain chemicals used for colouring, flavouring and preserving.

The rule of, natural health is that whatever article of food and drink is fit for being taken in its raw or uncooked condition, should be so taken. All fruits, nuts and many vegetables like cucumber, carrot, radish, beat-root, turnip and onion can be eaten in their raw condition. Cooking them or processing them will rot vitamins, natural salts and fibrous substance in them. Fibrous substance will aid easy movement of bowels and eliminates constipation.

Recent investigations have shown that persons who take raw food and especially fibrous matter, are very much less prone to cancer than those who consume processed food.

Groundnut, green gram, Bengal gram with outer skin intact, when soaked in water for a day or two. will germinate. Their sprout will be very rich in vitamins. Such sprout will be a very nutritious food.

Eating raw food will give good exercise to teeth. A smaller quantity of raw food will have the same nutritive value as a much larger quantity of cooked food. Obesity can also be avoided by consuming more of raw food instead of cooked food.

Fresh cane juice contains practically all the nutrients required for the body. It is even taken as a medicine for jaundice. But white sugar manufactured out of cane juice, will have lost all nourishing elements. White sugar is even considered as a negative food which is

harmful to health. ,

Alcoholic liquors, narcotic drugs and tobacco in whatever form, are very injurious to health and should be totally abjured. Tobacco related diseases take a heavy toll of about 2.5 million lives every year.

Coffee and tea, cocoa and cola are also harmful to health. But coffee and tea drinking has become almost universal. It is too much to expect people to give them up totally. At least their consumption should be limited to one or two cups a day.

Food taken in excess of what the body can digest and assimilate, becomes poison in the body. While poor people suffer on account of inadequate intake of food, people who have means, suffer from over eating. They eat too frequently and they eat in advance of hunger. Even when they are not hungry, they eat merely because it is breakfast time, lunch time or dinner time. Even after their hunger is satisfied they continue to eat because the food is tasty. The use of salt, chillies, tamarind, sugar and condiments, has made it possible for people to eat even when they are not hungry or long after their hunger is satisfied.

In Britain many people were used to late and heavy dinner. Next morning they used to take sumptuous breakfast also. Realising that such excess intake of feed was responsible for many diseases; a movement called the "Breakfastless dub" was started about a century ago. It was found that by skipping the breakfast, their health improved remarkably. They were free from head ache, and heaviness of the stomach and they could work better.

At one time the belief was that our body required large amount of protein and fat_ m order to be healthy and strong. But the present, medical opinion is that such high proportion of protein and fat is not required and is even harmful.

Our stomach is the most overworked organ. It is denied rest. Even a wage slave is given rest for more than half the time each day and also given a weekly holiday. But the stomach is never given a holiday. On the other hand we take more food on a holiday. Fasting for one full day or at least for half a day in a week, will have remarkable effect on health. '

The mouth is not merely an inlet for our digestive system but is also a digestive organ. The process of digestion commences in the mouth itself. In the process of chewing, the food that we take is broken into tiny bits and mixed with saliva. Time is needed for salivary glands to make and deliver the amount of saliva needed for each morsel of food. Hence food should be eaten slowly and chewed well before it goes into the stomach because stomach has no teeth.

Bodily exertion or exercise is absolutely necessary to keep the body fit. In the absence of such exertion or exercise, the organs of the body degenerate and lose flexibility. Exertion or exercise improves blood circulation, increases the intake of air which is the source of vital energy and tones up muscles and nerves.

Walking is a safe and inexpensive exercise. *Yogasanas* constitute a splendid method of keeping the body .flexible, fit and radiant. In *Yogasanas* in addition to exercise there will be relaxation and rejuvenation of the body. *Yogasanas* are also inexpensive.

The body requires not only exertion or exercise, but also rest and relaxation. Primarily such rest and relaxation are provided by sleep. A few *asanas* like *Shavasana* provide deep relaxation of the body. Fasting provides rest not only to our 'digestive system but also to the entire body, because the energy required for digestion, will be released for repairing the tissues of our body.

Mental rest and relaxation are as much necessary as physical rest and relaxation. There is a close association between the body and the mind.

Mental stress and strain and tension lead to many diseases including psychosomatic diseases like hypertension, diabetes and peptic ulcers. The present day life style and the fast tempo of life, especially in big urban centres, create stress and tension. Any method of relaxing such stress and tension and calming the mind, will greatly contribute for good health.

Elimination or excreting the bodily wastes, is very important for health. Such excretion is made through faeces, urine, breath and sweat. Constipation, is the cause for a wide range of diseases. Eating refined food, not drinking enough water and sedentary habits are generally the causes for constipation. Eating food that has roughage, drinking at least 8 glasses of water a day and bodily exertion or exercise are generally sufficient to overcome constipation. Sufficient physical exertion or exercise and exposing the body to sun's rays for about 15 minutes a day, will bring about perspiration which is one of the ways of elimination of bodily waste.

If we live in harmony with nature and in accordance with the rules of natural hygiene, we shall generally be healthy and free from diseases. If on account of our violating the rules of natural hygiene or for any other cause, we fall ill or have any disease, regaining health with the aid of nature alone and without recourse to drugs or surgery, is known as Nature cure or Naturopathy.

At one time Naturopathy had a heterodox odour about it inviting derisive smile. It was considered as a new fad or crankishness without any scientific basis. Those days have gone. Nature cure has stood the test of time. It is now well accepted as a scientific system of therapy.

In America, a few allopathic doctors who happened to study naturopathy out of curiosity, were fully convinced of the scientific basis and the value of Naturopathy. Some of them went so far as to abandon their practice of allopathy and to take to Naturopathy. They even braved the disciplinary action taken against them by the Medical Council of America.

The first principle of Nature Cure or Naturopathy is that the power of healing is inherent in the body itself. It is nature that heals and not the medicines. If any organ of our body gets deranged and does not function properly for whatever reason, it has capacity to come back to its normal and healthy condition by its own power. Unless the damage to that organ has gone too far and beyond repair. If the cause for such malfunctioning of that organ, are removed, nature itself starts the process of healing it. The function of Nature Cure or Naturopathy consists in removing such causes and creating a favourable atmosphere for the healing process of nature to work most effectively.

We can observe this healing power of the body in animals. If an animal falls ill, it will not touch food. It will lie down in a quiet place and rest completely until it regains health. It will start eating only after it becomes normal. If a dog is wounded, it lies down and licks the wound until it heals completely.

The second principle of Nature Cure or Naturopathy is the laws of health and the laws of healing, are the same. The factors which contribute for health, are the very factors which are effective in healing also. Thus air, water and sun light are the therapeutic instruments in nature cure. So also earth or mud. Elimination of body wastes, fasting and rest are the main therapeutic methods in Nature Cure.

In Naturopathy, the treatment generally starts with the process of cleansing the body.

An enema is given to evacuate completely the faecal matter in the body. The patient is then made to fast for a day or two. If he is unable to fast for a MI day, he is given fruit juice or tender coconut water or honey. Even during the fast, the patient is given enema every day. The fast is a cleaning process for blood, muscles and nerves.

The patient is made to rest completely during the treatment. Enema, fasting and" rest will have remarkable effect on the patient because the vital power of the body which would otherwise be used for digesting food and eliminating waste from the body, will be available for repairing the diseased organs and for healing them.

One other method of treatment under Naturopathy is the application of cold pack, hot pack, wet pack and mud pack on different parts of the body. Mud has remarkable power of removing poisons and toxins from the body.

Louis Cunhe, a German doctor, devised about a century ago several kinds of water baths to treat different diseases. Hip bath, spinal bath, foot bath and steam bath are the important ones among them.

Massaging the body is also one of the methods of treatment in Naturopathy. Massage activates many organs of the body, relaxes the muscles and nerves and removes pain and stress in the body.

Sun's rays have great therapeutic effect on the body. Different colours in sun's rays, have different effect on the body. Chemotherapy is a part of Naturopathy.

Yoga therapy is another branch of Naturopathy. It is very effective for certain diseases like asthma, bronchitis, hypertension, diabetes, spondylitis, peptic ulcers, ailments of eyes and a few other psychosomatic diseases.

The treatment under naturopathy being simple and free from risk, a person can treat himself for most of the diseases without the aid of a doctor. Hence the slogan of Nature Cure system is "Be thy own doctor".

The allopathic system generally treats the symptoms and not the disease. Allopathic medicines suppress the symptoms but do not remove the cause of the disease. The result is that though the patient momentarily gets relief, the disease may recur in the same form or in some other form. On the other hand Naturopathy aims at removing the cause of the disease.

Nature Cure or- Naturopathy is a drugless system while allopathy is a drug based system. Sir William Osier, a very eminent medical authority, said thus :

"Almost every virulent poison known to man is found in allopathic prescriptions. These poisons have a tendency to accumulate in the system, to concentrate in certain parts and organs and then cause continual and actual destruction of tissues".

Practically every allopathic drug has some adverse side effect. The side effect of some of these drugs is so great that the aphorism "the remedy is worse than the disease" will apply to these drugs.

Nearly a thousand drugs banned in Western countries as being positively harmful to the body, are freely allowed to be imported into our country or manufactured and sold in our country.

Adulteration is rampant in drug industry. Many times drugs whose expiry dates are over, are sold and used.

The prices of allopathic drugs have gone sky high. About 3 years ago their prices were

increased by 50 to 80 per cent. About 6 months ago the prices of many drugs were practically doubled.

Ever increasing number of people especially in urban areas, have become slaves to medicines. The modern man starts the day with a laxative tablet. After taking food he takes a digestive tablet or mixture. Thereafter he takes tonics, vitamin tablets or injections for his weakness. He takes tablets for head ache, cold, cough, blood pressure, diabetes or heart trouble. Before he retires to bed he takes a sleeping tablet. It is no wonder that his body has lost its power of resistance to diseases and the natural power to function, because his body is full of poison of these medicines.

Nature Cure or Naturopathy is very simple, easy, safe, cheap and very effective. Yet vast majority of people are ignorant of this system. We are living in an age of publicity and propaganda and high pressure marketing. The drug industry spends enormous amount of money on advertisement in newspapers and television. But Natural Hygiene and Nature Cure have no commercial interest to advertise. Only voluntary organisations interested in human welfare, have to propagate Natural Hygiene and Nature Cure. Every person who has been benefited by Natural Hygiene and Nature Cure, should spread the message of Natural Hygiene and Nature Cure so that his fellow men may be benefited by them.

The state should also encourage Natural Hygiene and Nature Cure by educating the public, by establishing nature clinics and hospitals and colleges of Naturopathy. Even if the state spends on Nature Cure one tenth of whole it spends on the allopathic dispensaries, hospitals and colleges, the health of the people will be better promoted.
