

BOOK REVIEW -**Ayurveda and Modern Medicine by R. D. Lele**

Clearly, this book should get high marks. Most of us have a 'holier-than-thou' attitude towards anything which is Indian. Dr. Lele, a renowned teacher and scholar, has done an excellent job of linking Ayurveda and Modern Medicine and looking at Ayurveda 'scientifically', while compiling this book. Science stands on the tripod of 'logic, experience and observation' as suggested by Ingersoll. Ayurveda is scientific in this sense. If one agrees with Marie Curie that 'all science is measurement and all measurement is science', Ayurveda does not qualify fully. Even Modern Medicine is an art based on science, as is Ayurveda.

A medical teacher once told an audience that 'we scientists should not encourage Ayurveda which is nothing but a hoax'. This attitude is not uncommon amongst half-baked scientists. I, for one, believe that the synthesis of the best of both these systems will be a great boon to suffering humanity. Dr. Lele has done yeoman service in this direction. He has studied Ayurveda literature with his usual meticulousness and punctiliousness to produce this book. I recommend it very strongly.

Dr. Lele rightly suggests that the true Ayurveda approach is epitomised in the introductory passage of Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine, one of the most popular and prestigious modern text books of medicine. "Tact, sympathy and understanding are

expected of the physician, for the patient is no mere collection of symptoms, signs, disordered functions, damaged organs and disturbed emotions. He is human, fearful and hopeful, seeking relief, help and reassurance. . . . The true physician has a Shakespearian breadth of interest in the wise and the foolish, the proud and the humble, the stoic hero and the whining rogue. He cares for people". However, he wisely advises the practitioners of Ayurveda to apply the same searching scrutiny to their own concepts and practices, as modern allopathic medicine has done in the last five decades. This is wise counsel because scientific evaluation embellished by the various sophisticated tools available today to assess the safety and efficacy of therapy, has resulted in appropriate corrections in our previous erroneous perceptions of many available therapies.

This book which is well brought out with an excellent index will enthuse youngsters in India and abroad to think deeply about the treasures of this ancient 'Wisdom of Life' as a result of which humanity at large will definitely benefit. The print is neat and the language lucid, thus making it easy and enjoyable to read. This book should find a place in every medical school library, nay on every doctor's bookshelf.

B. M. Hegde

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"The people's health ... is the concern of the people themselves. They must want health. They must struggle for it and plan for it. Physicians are merely experts whose advice is sought in drawing up plans and whose cooperation is needed in carrying them out. No plan, however well designed and well intentioned, will succeed if it is imposed on the people. The war against disease and for health cannot be fought by physicians alone. It is a people's war in which the entire population must be mobilized permanently".

Sigrist H E. *Civilization and Disease*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Edition, 1962. (First published, Cornell University Press, 1943.)