INAUGURAL ADDRESS TO THE SCIENTIFIC SESSION, SIXTH ALL NEPAL MEDICAL CONFERENCE

By Shree Bal Krishna Sama

I am extremely happy now for I deem it a high privilege to inaugurate this 'Scientific Session' among so many distinguished doctors and personalities having august scientific knowledge, whom I honour with all my heart. Though I have no technical knowledge besides my natural appreciation and love for Science with poetical emotion and philosophical quest, yet I am very thankful to Nepal Medical Association for such opportunity given to me.

I want to say humbly that our country, Nepal remained for five thousand years a land of poets and philosophers. Of course Science as an instinctive quest or natural phenomena was born along with the civilization of mankind. Along with some fruits and water our ancestors knew some food tastes, some bitter, then they know some poisons and some medicines too. They knew some arts and crafts. They had language and literature. They became cultured. But science with modern conception was almost unknown to our country. We have so many poets and philosophers like Ushana and Deerghatama, Gautam Madhuchhanda, Gautam Buddha, Kaushik Vishwanitra, Valmiki and others: but Edward Jenners, Graham Bell, Galileo, Michael Faraday, Darwin, Louis Pasteur, Edison, we have none. We have Brahmadatta, Vajambhrini but no Marie Curie.

Here I must not forget some facts and figures. About the same time when Doctor Jenner had inoculated his infant son with variolous matter or Cow Pox germs, Ekadeva, who was the inventor of anti-biliousness pills (pittaghna) and who was the chief physician at the court, had inoculated King Rana Bahabur Shah in Nepal. But why we could not develop our medicine? Because we were not scientific, we became individualistic, we could not think, work and exchange our ideas together to make it stand on a scientific basis. Individuality and preservation of secrecy became the curse for our development. I again remember Doctor Jenner, and quote from Farington's diary— "Before Jenner published his discovery, Sir Walter Farquhar said to him that if he chose to preserve it a secret, he might make £ 100,000 by it. It would be easy for him to prove its value to medical men of character who would recommend it and warrant its efficiency, which would enable him to get £ 10,000 a year by it; but Dr. Jenner determined to give it to the world."

He was as good as his word. In 1798 Jenner published his "Inquiry into Cause and Effect of the variolae vaccinae". Whereas our physician Ekadeva did not give us a single line. So at that time we had not a single hospital, what to talk of a laboratory or a microscope. Then the sick men had to run like beggars to the houses of physicians.

Therefore this kind of 'Scientific Session' which is new and the first in our country and which is very essential therefore is heartily welcome. I hope this will be any inspiration to our Doctors and our local medical men. Through centuries of long experience our Vaidyas or medical men have been able to discover some good medicines. But those are prepared in the old style of very crude nature. Our medical Vaidyas hesitate to treat them scientifically. Our old styled surgical men could not compete with the ordinary modern surgeon, so they gave up surgery totally but some good medicine with good faith like good food are coolly passing on.

But here I want to point out what our medical men are lacking. I feel that our local experienced Vaidyas should not be afraid of science and hesitate to have their good medicine investigated with acute observation and scientific analysis with the help of their brother doctors in some medical institute having all the accessories of latest scientific methods. In the same spirit the highly qualified doctors also should not hesitate to help their brother Vaidyas and co-operate with them in research upon their traditional medicines. The young doctors should climb up to the hills and mountains to meet the blunt and unqualified village-physicians who know some rare and most wonderful Himalayan drugs. Those unexploited medicines might be something new to the world. As Shakespeare says:

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

I think that not only the doctors and the Vaidyas but also the scientists and the philosophers should co-operate between themselves to make this world worth living. The philosophers should not only be imaginary thinkers but they should think scientifically. And so the scientists should not only acquire strength mechanically to be powerful, but behave philosophically well for humanity.

Here I quote from Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, who was a great scientist of India. He says :

"The excessive specialization of modern science in the West has led to the danger of losing sight of the fundamental fact that there can be but one truth, one science which includes all the branches of knowledge."

If we go deeper and deeper either through the line of science or by that of philosophy we reach to the same sphere of Absolute Truth, Unknowledgeable.

The science of the nineteenth century ended with the atom, the science of the twentieth century begins with the atom. Atoms consist of two essential parts protons and electrons. For

Some period electron was supposed to represent the final stage in the analysis of matter. But now it is supposed that the electrons are 'disturbed areas' in space caused by the convergence and coalescence of waves in an imaginary 'sub-aether'. Another point must be mentioned on account of its profound philosophic interest; namely, that they seem in a peculiar way to be outside the laws of science altogether.

Here comes the Vedic sage Deerghatama who concludes his philosophical thought in 'Isha Upanished' thus—

Aum Kham Brahma

Kham— is the space and that imaginary 'sub-aether' is Brahma.

Passing now from the more strictly scientific aspects, we have to examine the general effect of these revelations on modern thought, and how they fit in with pre-existing philosophic system of our Kishi Deerghatama. The most revolutionary philosophic fact is that, as the light of science penetrates more deeply into the unknown we pass out of the world of concrete entities into a new world consisting of symbols alone. Matter is gradually analyzed down to particles smaller and still smaller till in the end we reach something which is not a particle at all but merely a symbol, something which however greatly it may be magnified remains radically different from what we imagine in a crude particle of matter. Not only a change of size, but a change of nature has occurred.

To many minds such a conclusion appears self-destructive. But to philosophic minds there is nothing particularly surprising about it. Modern physics has not changed the reality into symbols. It has merely replaced the old symbolism by a new symbolism which works better.

I have referred to these not to minimize the value of science, but to draw the attention of the scientists towards the charitable door of philosophy where the poor and the sick sufferer are standing stretching out their hands. I again quote Shakespeare:

'It is excellent to have a giants' strenght, but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant. 'So medical science is the best part of science if the giant can make that serve for humanity. In the poor and under developed countries the greatest charity is the distribution of medicine to the persons in need; the greatest virtue is the medical service to the sick; and the greatest humanity is the voluntary sacrifice of the doctors. So far the technical knowledge the doctors should be scientific but in practice they should be philosophical to be a Buddha or a Mahatma. For that charitable treatment we have many philosophical thoughts and methods which we can humbly present to the scientifically powerful world.

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