

Evolution and Progress Of Kentian Homoeopathy

In the late twentieth-century version of Indian homoeopathy the rising interest in metaphysics in the eastern world has coincided with the homeopathic resurgence. I believe that our interest in mysticism and belief in spiritual well-being as the highest good are the preconditions for acceptance of Kentian homeopathy.

After I passed my college in 1979 I had great interest in increasing my experience in classical homoeopathy, I also heard there were great homeopaths in India and I wanted to deepen my study. Since that time I visited many homeopathic hospitals and clinics and have met many very fine practitioners. One of my first exposures to this clinical environment was with Dr. Sarosh Wadia in Bombay. Later Dr. Sarabhai Kapadia they were both Kentian prescriber, they treated thousands in their practice since four decades.

There were various methods practiced during my young days some were prescribing on key notes, some were prescribing on pathological symptoms and yet some were treating only physical symptoms but the one that impressed me the most was selecting the remedy based on indications that are confined to the complete Basic Symptoms of the patient which include the characteristics of the patients' complaints, modalities and concomitants including the Keynote Characteristic and Constitutional characteristic symptoms which are given the highest rank in the evaluation of symptoms. This method I feel is the true Kentian Method.

The main difficulty to practice Kentian method is that when we select the selection of the simillimum we may not always get all the symptoms from the case e.g in some cases we only get physical generals and no mentals, in some cases we only get mental symptoms and no generals or in some cases we only get local pathological symptoms!!! If we develop the insight about these three classes of cases just highlighted then we will face difficulty in selecting the remedy because a Kentian homoeopath is trained to identify the man behind the disease that is to say understand generals and mentals over the particulars and hence if this is missing in the case then he is at a loss to choose the simillimum because the sick individual is absent.

What I don't like in homoeopaths who are Kentian is that usually ignore diagnosis and pathological findings of the case, remember we must keep in mind that the diagnosis of the disease has an importance, and an importance on which one cannot have the slightest doubt, not only from the point of view of the prognosis as it is believed by the unicists, but from the point of view of the therapeutics, because it may have all sorts of extremely important consequences. The Kentian homoeopaths have the habit of saying that practice must be based purely on symptoms and that the diagnosis of the disease has no importance for the treatment; and that it is important only from the point of view of prognosis. This idea is absolutely erroneous and needs correction.

Let's review the history -going through heralds homoeopathy was perceived as an efficacious therapeutic method since the time of recorded history in the West as well as in the East it was

codified and put prominently before the medical profession by Samuel Hahnemann in the far end of the Eighteenth Century. Boenninghausen, Jahr, Hering and their contemporaries poured their life - blood to spread the dynamic spirit of this new Healing Art throughout the four corners of the world. Their zeal infected the mind and spirit of those who were open in mind, receptive to new and newer truths and agile enough to carry the torch of homoeopathy in the marathon race of human progress and its fight with death, disease and incapacities. The torch continued to burn brighter till it reached the hands of Kent and his giant colleagues. Kentian age in the American Homoeopathic history can be likened to the great Periclean Age of the ancient Romans. After him came the period of stagnation and vegetation in spite of the solitary efforts of Boger, Roberts and a few of their ilk. The dynamic spirit of homoeopathy began to wane; nothing of real importance was discovered in its field, drug - proving came practically to a stand - still, progressive vision was clouded and Homoeopathy seemed to lose ground in competition with her rival, the orthodox school of medicine which is popularly known as the Allopathic school. After them no Vivekananda appeared in the domain of Homoeopathy to keep ablaze its aggressive flame to transmute the recent advances in Medicine into the purest gold of Homoeopathic philosophy and outlook - even though the so - called modern scientific medicine raised more problems than it could possibly solve in the sphere of Science and Art of Medicine.

For non Kentian followers too much emphasis on pathology and particulars is equally dangerous, largely for the reason that the latter is often almost entirely dependent upon the purely local, or, to use the Kentian designation, "particular" symptoms for the choice of his remedy; we all know the futility of prescribing upon such symptoms alone. After all, those symptoms which Kent called "generals" are our guiding ones in the selection of the remedy, and it is just these symptoms which do not lend themselves to pathological interpretation; unfortunately, these are the very symptoms which most of our modern teachers are failing to sufficiently emphasise in their teaching, too often regarding them as unsusceptible of scientific explanation. The result is seen in the yearly crop of homoeopathic graduates who know next to nothing of homoeopathic prescribing, but who are ultra-scientifically trained in the purely pathologic prescribing of the day. A good diagnostician is usually a poor prescriber and vice versa, the former has to be a technician of a high order, the latter has to be an artist with ideals and an imagination, rising well above a mere knowledge of dry facts; he must be able to visualise, to draw mental pictures, as it were; no doubt all this sounds fanciful, the vapourings of an irresponsible dreamer, yet the fact remains that the dreamers in the homoeopathic school have generally done the best therapeutic work and have at times achieved the seemingly impossible.

Kentian homoeopathy is largely based on Swedenborg's doctrine, this can be found repeatedly in Kentian homoeopathy. First of all it is an explanation of Kent's emphasis on the necessary ranking of symptoms; in other words deciding which symptoms belong to which Swedenborgian layer of the psyche. It is quite astonishing to find that Kent may have borrowed the terms Particular and Generals from Emanuel Swedenborg's concept of man. These terms were introduced in Kent's original texts and adopted by Margaret Tyler and John Weir in their addendum to the Repertory [1950]. According to Kent the essence of being human consists in: The man wills and understands, the cadaver does not will and does not understand. The combination of these two, the will and understanding, constitute man. Conjoined they make life and activity, they manufacture the body and cause all things of the body. With the will and understanding operating in order we have a

healthy man." and: the Particulars are the symptoms relating to the area of the "Will and Understanding". The mental symptoms relate to the intellectual functions and rational reactions to emotions and mood, and the Generals are symptoms relating to the entire Man. The hierarchical division of the Psyche into the three separate levels in Swedenborg's Doctrine of Degrees is echoed by Kent's "Use of the Repertory" Symptoms to be taken are those relating to the loves and hates, of desires and aversions (Swedenborg's Soul, the unique); Next - are those belonging to the rational mind, so called Intellectual Mind. (Swedenborg's Reason, with the intellect); Thirdly - those belonging to the memory. (Swedenborg's Memory, the third level) In his "Use of the Repertory" an earlier aspect of Swedenborg stands out. In his first anatomical studies Swedenborg had mainly focused on the blood and body fluids since he considered these essential for the bodily functions Kent continues his instructions for the use of the Repertory as follows: The next symptoms that are most important are those related to the entire man and his entire body, or his blood and fluids: as sensitiveness to heat, to cold, to storm, to rest, to night, to day, to time. They include both symptoms and modalities" . The place and the view on the typically homoeopathic modalities derived from Swedenborg's earliest anatomical works.

The so-called Kentian series of potencies also derives an essential element from Swedenborg. Swedenborg's view on Infinity was quite complicated and stated that infinity should be approached step by step. The road to infinity progressed by certain Degrees. Kent: the potencies' point of impact in a diseased body depends on their degree of dilution. The highest potencies are able to reach the middle level (the brain), and perhaps even the highest level, the Soul. In this context potencies are looked upon as forms of mental energy. Classical homoeopaths hold this idea to be self-evident . The essence of human Nature Swedenborg believed to be controlled by the basic spiritual impulse. This corresponds with Hahnemann's idea that a disease is caused by a disturbed Vital Force, the Dynamis. The Swedenborgians always regarded a disease as a disturbance of the inner psychical heart of man, and therefore a disease is always a psychical problem, with symptoms and aspects of the patient's mind, and his spiritual existence. This compares with the fundamental prevalence Kent attaches to the psychical symptoms of the Mind in his Lectures. . In the British Homoeopathic Journal of 1956 Twentyman already concluded: "One took it that Kent was a pure Hahnemannian, but of course he was not. He was a synthesis of Hahnemann and Swedenborg."

According to me the Kentian system with its mathematical repertorisation is a most interesting and highly developed branch of Homoeopathy, maybe the most perfect possible method of healing. But I am afraid we will not increase in number, as we ought to do, if we cannot offer a more logical teaching of materia medica, based upon pharmacological descriptions of the drug pictures with an indication of the differentiating symptoms.

The findings of bacteriology have been a stumbling block to the Kentian homoeopaths in the same manner as the homoeopathic potency is to the Allopath. The works of Allen, Gregg, Kent and their followers and co-workers abound in such maxims "Bacteria are the result, not the cause of disease." Dr. Kent has devoted a considerable portion of a chapter of his Homoeopathic Philosophy to this end. He was a great commentator, a grand propagandist of the principles enunciated by Hahnemann. His assiduous work on the Repertory, his unique shifting of the chaff from the wheat of

the Materia Medica, his wonderful delineation from the wheat of the Materia Medica, his wonderful delineation of drug pictures, and above all his metaphysical approach to the science and art of Homoeopathy, have made a large number of disciples among homoeopaths all over the world, including me. This Kentian approach is not an isolated development in the stream of Homoeopathy. It is a correlated wave in the current of homoeopathic thought since the eighties of the last century.

I have myself treated so many complicated diseases like acute cardiac failure, congestive cardiac failure, angina pectoris thanks to Dr. Douglas Borland M.D. (1885-1960) whose works influenced me a lot fortunately he was a best disciple of Dr Kent studying with him in Chicago. He was known to be one of those from England who brought Kentian homeopathy back to his motherland.

The earlier homeopaths, starting from Hahnemann, were the ones that studied the hardest. They were the ones that probably understood homeopathy the best. These people are now long gone. What we have access to today, is usually a diluted aspect of it. You have attended seminars or read books, and said: "This is Kentian homeopathy". You won't investigate the person that wrote the book. Somebody gives a seminar in the Kentian tradition, and you will find out that not one of them have been taught by Kent. They haven't studied or practised with Kent, and most of them have not read what Kent has read.

When I started my practice, there were mainly two schools of homoeopathic practice - the Keynote (Calcutta) and the Kentian (London and American). There was no theory of essences, of delusions, of dreams, of group provings or intuition, nor deep psychological theories about remedies and patients. Homoeopathy was simple, basic, based on symptoms found in patients and in remedies. At least, so it appeared. Then when I went to learn from my mentor Dr.Sarabhai Kapadia and Dr.S.K.Dubey. I found out that behind this simplicity, there was a deep understanding of philosophy and the nature of remedies, an understanding developed through careful study and patient application of the law of similars. Every problem such as potency, repetition or repertory was grappled within clinical practice. My mentors did not believe in mere authority - they believed in experience and experiment. For each of these subjects, they studied long and hard, and from various sources, experimented and tried to find answers. They had a vast practice to see the results for themselves. The beauty of them is that they distilled the various works of great masters in the light of their own experience and made it easily available to students and practitioners.

Lastly I will quote Dr. J.T. Kent (1849-1916) who said, "There are no diseases, only sick people." 'Kentian' refers to practicing homeopathy using the law of similars, the minimum dose, the single dose, repertorizing to find the remedy and giving added importance to mental and psychic aspects, too. In Kent's method of repertorisation he placed primary importance on mentals, generalized less, and considered physical generals as secondary. He would consider particular symptoms in order to differentiate remedies.