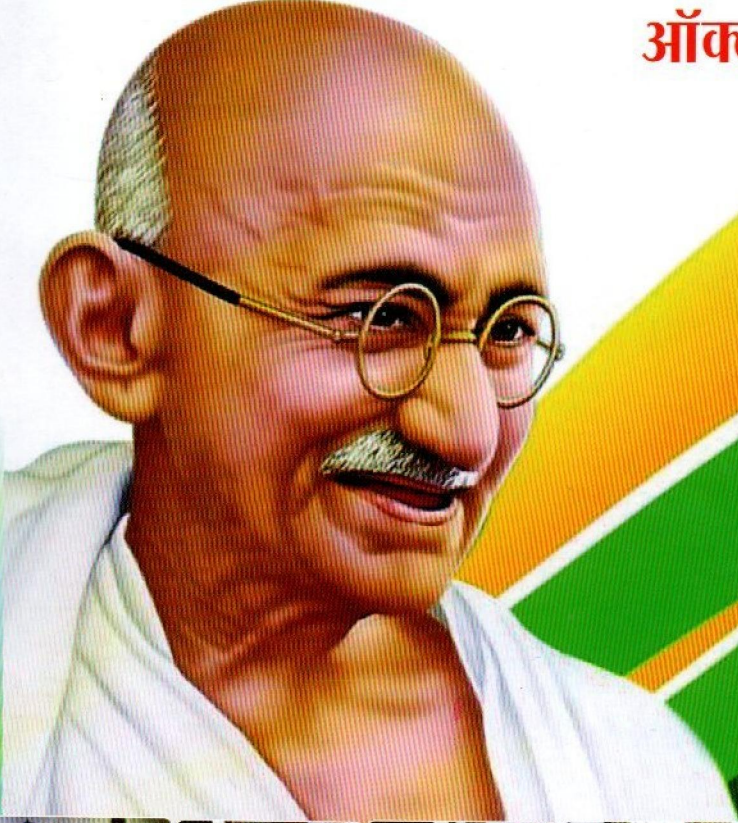


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Mahatma Gadhi's Approach To Nature Cure

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Mahatma Gandhiji was leader of the masses and he spend his entire life-time caring for the poor and downtrodden. If we go through the experiments made by Mahtma Gandhi on several aspects of life, what come clear is that he had a fair knowledge that health is not, and cannot be, a commodity but an outcome, or rather, a by-product of various human activities. Food, exerisce, cleanliness, education, clothing, housing, agriculture, work employment all have a bearing on the health of an individual and, even more importantly, an individual's engagement with the community and God. Hence, selfless work and prayer were made an integral part of the daily routine in his 'ashram life'. His health determinants dictated him to adopt nature cure and recommed to all others as it emphasizes self-responsibility and provides self-reliance. According to him, So long as people depend on drugs, doctors and hospitals for their health needs, they are not truly liberated.

"I suggest that they (scientists & doctors) should turn their attention towards the seven lakhs of the villages

of India. They wold immediately discover that all the qualified men and women are required for village service, not after the manner of the West, but after the manner of the East. They will then adapt themeselves to many indigenious systems."

"India does not need imported drugs from the West when she has an inexhaustible stock of a verietiy of drugs grown in the villages themselves. But more than drungts they have to teach the people the right mode of liveing." (Harijan , 15-6-1947, p. 1845).

Any chronicle on the system of nature cure in India will be incomplete without noting the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to society in general and to Indian naturopathy in particular. He was a staunch practitioner of naturopathy all through his life. There were scores of instances where he experimented with the system on himself, his family members and ultimately on the public who followed him in letter and spirit. In 1897 and 1900, he assisted his wife in delivering Ramdas and Devdas by readig obstrics manuals in Durban. And, later, treated his children

only with naturopathy. He and his volunteers used naturopathy modalities to treat Boer Warwounded soldiers as well as during a plague outbreak in South Africa.

Gandhiji's introduction to nature cure began with this conviction in vegetaianism. For him, vegetarianism is in spiritual harmony with the rest of Nature. He insisted that man didn't have kill to eat. Vegetarian food is the healthiest, most economical, makes efficient use of land and fosters values of non-violence and humanitraianism. Apart from a cultural habit, and vow administered by his mother, he learnt why it was right to be a vegetarian by reading. Henry Salt's A Plea for Vegeterianism, Howard William's The ethics of Diet, and Anna Kingsford's The pefect way in diet while he was doing law in the 1880s in England. Gandhiji was greatly influenced by Adolf Just's book, Return to Nature, The paradise Regained and Louis Kuhne's New Science of Healing.

He had written articles and books on nature cure. To name a few: Key to Health, Nature cure, Diet and Diet reforms, Prayer and Vegetarianim. He initiated a nature cure hospital in a small village near Pune, Urlikanchan, to provide medical services to the rural poor. This was an offshoot of the Nature Cure Clinic and Sanatorium at

Pune which was serving only the urban rich at that time. To this day, it is a standing testimony to the values cherished by Mahatma Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi's connection with National Institute of Naturopathy : On January 2, 1932, Dr. Dinshah Mehta met Gandhiji in Bombay upon the latter's invitation. It lasted for 21 minutes and continued as a life-long intimate association. Dr. Dinshah became Gandhiji's personal nature cure physician till the end. He supervised two of the three world-famous 21 day-fasts of Gandhiji and many other shorter ones.

It is recorded history that, from August 21 to November 18, 1945, Gandhiji took a 90- day in patient course of treatments from Dr. Dinshah in his Nature cure Clinic and Sanatorium at Poona. It greatly imporved his health. During this period, Mahatma Gandhi gained 2.7 kg. weight and felt greatly refreshed. he remarked confidently. "I shall now live for 120 years!" Earlier, he had been wishing for it. He was in fairly good health when he was assassinated on January 30, 1948. Otherwise, who knows, he may have lived that long. Mahatma's conviction got concretized when he had signed on a trust deed with a promise to serve the people of India through nature cure by dedicating his remaining life.

Mahatma Gandhi founded the All

India Nature Cure Foundation trust on November 18, 1945; with Institution- the Nature cure Clinic and Sanatorium, Poona - as its nucleus. This is the only Nature Cure Trust, the deed of which was signed by Mahatma Gandhi. In the trues deed, the objects of making this charitable trust have been specified as spreading the knowledtge of the science of nature cure in all its aspects and expanding the activity of nature cure therapeutics so as to make its benefits available to all clases of people and especially the poor, putting said instituion on a permanent basis, with the ultimate object of creating from it a Nature Cure University.

Ministry of Ayush, government of India has declared November 18 as Naturopathy Day and it is celebrated by all Naturopaths and Naturopathy loving people all over the country and across the world.

According to Gandhiji, nature cure means a change for the better in one's outlook on life itself. It means regulation of one's life in accordance with the laws of health. It is not a matter of taking free medicine from the hospital or for fees.

"The man who accepts nature cure never begs. Self-help enhances self-respect. He takes steps to cure himself by eliminating poisons from the

ing ill in the future". (Harijan,2-6-1946, p.165).

"My love of nature cure and of indigenous systems does not blind me to the advance that Western medicine has made in spite of the fact that I have stingmatized is as black magic. I have used the harsh term, and I do not withdraw it, beause of the fact that it has countenanced vivisection and all the awfulness it means and because it ignores that immortal soul which resides in the body. I cling to nature cure in spite of its great limitations and in spite of the lazy pretensions of nature curits." (Harijan,11-8-1946, p.259).

Gandhiji writes in Hind Swaraj on doctors: "The business of a doctor is to take care of the body, or, properly speaking, nor even that. Their business is really to rid the body of diseases that may afflict it. How do these disease arise? Surely by our negligence. I have indulged in vice, I contract a disease, a doctor cures me, the odds are that I shall repeat the vice. Had the doctor not intervened, Nature world have done its work, and I would have acquired mastery over myself, would have been freed from vice and would have become happy... A continuance of a course of medicine must, therefore, result in loss of control over the mind.

ern (English) medicine is to deepen our slavery.”

Eat sparingly, now and then fast; err on the lower side rather than over eating.” Gandhi’s Motto : Self-reliance

the fields of his village, he may make use of them. Crores live and die like this without a murmur. They have not so much as heard of a doctor, much less seen one face to face.”