



Gandhian views on Health

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Abstract: Gandhi wrote a book entitled "Key to Health" in 1942 during his imprisonment at the time of Quit India Movement by translating a Gujarathi Book into English. He stated in the preface "I am giving a new name : Key to Health. In this book Mahatma Gandhi highlighted the role of air, water, food in keeping good health. Health denotes physical and mental fitness of a person purified air, water food etc. is necessary for good health. MahakviKalidasa says "Sareeramadyamkhalu dharmasadhanam" Body is the first instrument to perform Dharma.

Key words: Health is wealth, Oxygen, earth, water, sky

Analysis

Mohandas karam Chand Gandhi is well known as Mahatma Gandhi. He is the Father of our Nation. He is a great social reformer. He wrote a book entitled "Key to Health" in 1942 during his imprisonment at the time of Quit India Movement by translating a Gujarathi Book into English. He started writing the book in 1942 and completed it in 1944. He stated in the preface "I am giving a new name: Key to Health. Anyone who observes the rules of health mentioned in this book will find that he has got in it a real key to unlock the gates leading him to health. He will not need to knock at doors of doctors or vaidyas from day to day." ¹In this book Mahatma Gandhi highlighted the role of air, water, food in keeping good health. Health denotes physical and mental fitness of a person purified air, water food etc. is necessary for good health. MahakviKalidasa says "Sareeramadyamkhalu dharmasadhanam" (शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम्)²Body is the first instrument to perform Dharma. What is the body? Human body is made up of five elements. They are earth, water, sky, light and air.³

These are called "Pancha Maha Bhutani." Human body consists of five senses of perception, five senses of action and mind.⁴The five senses of perception are eyes, nose, tongue, ears and skin through which we can see smell, taste, hear and feel the objects respectively. The five senses of action are the hands, feet, mouth, anus and genitals. Mind is considered to be the 11th sense which is the collection of thoughts. Healthy body does works with coordination of senses and mind. Mahatma Gandhi said that "A healthy mind in healthy body is self-evident truth."⁵In the society every man wishes to live with good health and happiness. There are three key elements in keeping up good health viz. air, water and food.

Oxygen is essential for life. All living beings live by inhaling oxygen thorough nose. However many of us inhale insufficient quantity of air and thus invite many problems. If people can take long breaths as suggested by Patanjali in his Pranayama techniques, more oxygen will be supplied to lungs which will, in turn purify the cells and thus contribute to good health. Living in



houses with good ventilation ensures good health.

Next to air, water is necessary for life. Man can't live without water for more than a few days. Unpurified water is the main cause of many diseases. Drinking water must be pure. To keep up good health every man needs to drink 2 to 3 liters of water every day. Now a days well water and river water are not suitable for direct drinking. Boiled water or mineral is safe to drinking which will keep us protected from may infections.

Along with air and water, food is essential for health and life. In Bhagavadgeetha Lord Krishna says "अन्नादभवन्ति भूतानि"⁶ (It is food which generates the human body). So food gives us life. Food is two types viz. Vegetarian and Non-Vegetarian. Vegetarian meansleaves, roots, grains, fruits, dry fruits, walnuts etc. Mahatma Gandhi was a strict vegetarian. In Bhagavadgeetha Lord Krishna said about three types of food namely Satvika, Rajasa and Tamasa. Satvika food gives us long life, energy and strength.

Rajasa and Tamasa food is the main cause of all diseases. Thus we must take care of our health and eat satvika food.⁷ Leaf vegetables and fresh fruits must be eaten every day. We all know that "Health is wealth" and cleanliness is next to goodness. "In the preparation of food three types of cleanliness is necessary. These are *patrasuddhi* (Cleanliness of vessels), *Padardhasauddhi* (Cleanliness of materials) and *pakasuddhi* (Cleanliness of cook both physical and mental.) these are very important in making hygiene food. As food effects mind and health. Hygiene food is essential in keeping good health.

Bhagavan Sri SatyaSai Baba says that "illness doesn't depend upon ones money but ones way of living. Good health contributes to peace of mind and happiness. A healthy body is essential for social development and spiritual progress. A healthy body helps us developing purity of mind and heart".

Mahatma Gandhi stated that a country can be deemed as s development one when it doesn't require many hospitals and old age homes which indicates the health and wellbeing of people. By following the views of Mahatma Gandhi we can keep us good health and thus contribute to healthy society.

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रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिता हृद्याः आहाराः
सात्विकाप्रियाः॥
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आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः॥
यातयामं गतरसं पूतिपर्युपितं च यत्।
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