

Vaidya Bhaskar Vishwanath Gokhale: A great visionary

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Vaidya B. V. (aka Mama) Gokhale

“I witnessed his personality, I heard his intelligent discourse, I perceived his wisdom, and I realized his mission of life. He was an Ayurvedist in a true sense. He taught what he understood; he was a scientist in its purest form. He practiced what he taught and was a ‘Rishi’ in body, mind, and soul; he saw what was really true. For a student of Ayurveda, he will never die. Although his physical guidance will no more be available, his teachings will guide us forever; guide all those who are working in different fields for the upliftment of Ayurveda. Thus, the chapter of the history of Ayurveda is closed but it has led us to an enlightening new chapter to be written at the expense of a man who lived for Ayurveda and died fighting for it. The war is not over, it is just the beginning. Gokhaleji hypnotized us and

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he has dragged us all to the forefront of the war. Let us achieve his object.”^[1]

Above-mentioned are the words of Kaviraj A. Mujumdar about Late Vaidya Bhaskar Vishwanath Gokhale, also referred to as ‘Mama’ (maternal uncle) by his beloved disciples.

A skilled Ayurveda teacher, a far-sighted visionary, an eminent Ayurvediya physician, a revolutionary freedom fighter, and philosopher, all these words fall short to describe the personality that was ‘Mama Gokhaleji’. Born on 19th April 1903 at Kolhapur (Maharashtra) and deceased on 12th January 1962, he got a lifespan of only 62 years; but the task he has achieved in this short span is unparalleled. Born in a family of a judge, he was the youngest of all siblings; but was ill fated to lose his mother’s love quite early. He completed his primary and secondary school education at Kolhapur and then changed the base to Mumbai for further studies. He took admission at National Medical College which was initially encouraging the Non-Cooperation Movement, against British Rule in India. But when the college withdrew its support to Indian freedom movement, he decided to leave the college and devoted himself to the movement; for which he was even imprisoned. In 1924, he took admission to Ayurveda in Tilak Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Pune.

He completed the degree ‘Ayurveda Visharada’ of Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth in 1928. But after completion of his degree, he again actively participated in the freedom movement and was once again imprisoned in 1930 as well as in 1932. In 1934, he became a life member of the ‘Rashtriya Shikshan Mandal, Pune’. He completed his postgraduate degree ‘Ayurveda Parangata’ in 1937 and was the first person to be honored with the degree in India. In 1942, he once again participated in the ‘Quit India Movement’ and was again imprisoned for 2 years. After the death of Vaidya Purushottam shastri Nanal, he worked as the chief physician of Tarachand Ramnath Hospital, Pune. In 1946 he was appointed as the principal of Tilak Ayurveda.

Mahavidyalaya and worked as the chief physician at Tarachand Hospital and contributed a lot to the field of

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Ayurveda. He has written books on '*Dosha dhatu mala vidnyana*', '*Vikruti vidnyana*'; which are renowned for their new insights in Ayurveda. '*Chikitsapradeep*' is also one of his creations which have guided students for years together. He has significant contribution to the field of postgraduate education. He was the first principal of the Postgraduate Institute at Jamnagar in 1956. He began from scratch and before returning back to Pune after 6 years, he had become a renowned personality throughout India. He led the institute to a height of excellence.

He was a scientist in a true sense. He had a strong belief in integrative medicine, but on a sturdy *shastric* base. His vision was to give the best possible therapy to the patient. He had the vision of creating *Ayurveda Scientists* which has percolated in his books or articles on different subjects. His insight was to incorporate modern advances in the educational system without compromising with *shastric* standards. Even if we keenly observe the layout of medicines in the book '*Chikitsapradeep*',^[2] we can find a strong *shastric* understanding. Rather he had the vision to scientifically use and develop different formulations, which were not available in the traditional books. Beyond that, he had different ideas to increase the potency of routinely used drugs. The use of *Kajjali* in different formulations is one of its examples. He had practically demonstrated the use of *Parpaties* in various '*Annavaaha Strotovikruti*' (Diseases of Gastrointestinal tract). One of his very important experiment was '*Ekaushadhi Prayoga*' where he identified the efficacy of a single drug in a specific disease condition which made the therapy more and more accurate and it even encouraged further research in pharmacology.

In his honor, Gokhaleji's students, who are established Ayurveda physicians now, have shared their memories about their beloved '*Mamaji*' in the book '*Ayurved Bhaskar*'. The book speaks about special cases treated by *Mamaji*', logics behind his treatment, conclusions he had drawn, his experiences and teaching skills. The practical and clinical knowledge that they got from him is unique and that's why his students are the best clinicians and proved themselves as excellent '*Kritakarmas*' (the person who is capable to apply his experiences in clinical practice).

In his small collection by the name '*Ayurved Mhamaje kay?*' (What do you mean by Ayurveda?), he has analysed and elaborated in a fascinating way the origin and purpose of Ayurveda as a health science. In this book, he has critically analysed the causes for deterioration of Ayurveda and has shared some views about the means to achieve its renaissance. He has specially mentioned the need of quality postgraduate education and research in Ayurveda. Through his articles, he has emphasized that quality research in

Ayurveda is not possible without proper postgraduate education. His perspective was that the art in science can be made more and more exquisite by utilizing modern physical advances. Hence, he promoted his students to acquire knowledge of recent advances in biomedical sciences. He strictly criticized colleges with substandard educational quality and he insisted upon availability of ample number of patients in teaching institutes.

He has quoted different aspects of research in the book. '*To present the principles of Ayurveda in a way that all other scientific communities can understand it. Enlightening and analysing the available knowledge by the use of physical and technical advances is also a part of research. Studying Ayurvedic Sambitas in depth, examining Ayurvediya herbs by help of botanical methods, even to find out active principles, animal experiments are all different ways of research.*' These words show his approach for integration and respect for ancient wisdom.

He was the head of Tilak Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya and Seth Tarachand Ramnath Hospital for more than 20 years. He has uplifted these institutes to new altitudes. His formulations such as *Sukshma Triphala* and *Kutaja Parpati* are well-known and are routinely used now by many *vaidyas*. His contribution to Ayurveda Rasashala transformed the institute to an internationally reputed Ayurveda pharmacy. Ayurveda Rasashala owes its success to his efforts and vision.

He had strong principles for the betterment of Ayurvedic education, and he even dared to refuse grants from the government when it forced unjust rules on the institute and integration beyond expected boundaries. His students recall his memories, especially his formidable number of OPD and IPD patients. Physicians of modern system of medicine besotted his second opinion and even used to refer patients to him for emergency Ayurvedic treatment. This shows his authority on the subject and compels us to truly analyse the depth of our own medical knowledge. In spite of his thoughts of integration; if we keenly look into his different articles '*Rognidana Paddhati*' (methodology for Ayurvedic diagnosis) and '*Ayurveda and Samprapti*' (Ayurveda and etiopathogenesis of diseases), and '*Ayurveda and Samprapti*', we can find uniqueness of his thought. Renaissance in Ayurveda is not possible without in-depth study and strong belief in the *shastra*. The process of integration carries an inherent risk, and that is compromising the basic principles of Ayurveda. *Mamaji* never accepted this thing. In his writings, he has warned us against this threat, and made many concepts of basic principles crystal clear. A true Vaidya should have the capacity, courage, and balanced mind set to walk on this cutting edge of integration, so as to start the process of renaissance.

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He had paid special attention towards *Panchakarma Chikitsa* in his treatment. Only the use of *Shamana Chikitsa* isn't always useful in many complicated conditions. In such situation, proper analysis of factors such as *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Strotasa*, *Rugnabala*, *Vyadhibala*, etc., play a crucial role in determining the use of *Shodhana Chikitsa*. Panchakarma department at Jamnagar established by him has become legendary worldwide. His contribution to the success and progress of *Panchakarma Chikitsa* is enormous. He has narrated his clinical experiences about Shodhana Chikitsa in various articles by name 'Selected Case Reports'. All these articles are available in the book by the name 'Ayurveda bhaskar'.^[1] They can provide insights for research in this field, in the current era also.

He used to be very insistent about in-depth case taking by his students. He had himself designed different case sheets for different cases very skillfully. These designed patterns are in use even today. He was aiming at achieving standard and accurate therapeutics. He was very keen about the terminologies used. He always opposed usage of modern medicine terminologies for typical Ayurvedic one. He had very strong opinion about this issue and always insisted his students to use proper Ayurvedic terms. According to him maintaining the complete sense and meaning of Ayurvedic terms is essential to reach a classical diagnosis, for classical treatment and to achieve expected results.

Dosha, *Dushya*, *Ama*, *Agnimandya*, and *Strotorodha* are keys of *Nidana* and *Doshaghna*, *Deepana*, *Pachana* and *Strotoshodhana*

are keys for *Chikitsa* (treatment). This pattern of thinking was put forth strongly by Mama Gokhaleji and for last 50 years it has spread and it has become firm day-by-day among all *vaidyas*.

Words are less to describe his contributions. His contributions to Shastra, patients, students, educational institutes, and the entire educational system are difficult to cover in a short article. However what we can acquire is a thought, for the process of renaissance and courage to fight against adversities. We can appreciate the beauty of Ayurveda in a different way. Horizons are calling us and we can dare to proceed on the paths by widened vision. 'Mama Gokhale School of Thoughts' is guiding the generations for years together and in future these thoughts will definitely illuminate our paths to be the world leaders in health care.

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