

**Address by Shri Ananthanarayanan, Former Chief Justice of High Court, Madras on the occasion of  
11<sup>th</sup> Convocation of the Indian Academy of Medical Sciences on  
January 27, 1974**

At the outset I would like to express the trepidation that I feel in having to address such a distinguished gathering of specialists and savants. Oscar Wilde had once remarked that the only situation that was more distressing than the spiritual one of "*a Daniel amidst the Lions*" was the one of "*a single lion confronting a number of Daniels*". He felt rather like that.

I would like to refer to the two great hurdles confronting all countries attempting to utilize science for the amelioration of human suffering. The first is the conquest of grave or fatal communicable diseases. The most modern and progressive countries have overcome this hurdle. Unfortunately, it is still very much with us. However, I would not like to linger on this theme, for the simple reason that it involves a paramilitary mobilization of all sources, including human potential, of the State, the medical profession, the experts in epidemiology and Public Health and the entire nation. They all know what this means, but a single person like myself can hardly make suggestions of profit in this field. Tuberculosis, Leprosy, Malaria, Cholera, Smallpox and Typhoid have been virtually eliminated in the progressive western countries by such mobilization and we must all work together to achieve the same goal.

The second hurdle apart from the conquest of cancer and the malignant blood diseases, upon which intensive research is proceeding, comprises what I would broadly term as the diseases of Adaptation, of maturity and old age. In the West, attention is being focused more and more on this aspect since grave communicable diseases have been virtually overcome. I will also assume, for the time being, that we have overcome the first hurdle in India.

Before proceeding further I would like to stress that the State authorities, both at the Centre and regionally, are committed to the fostering of all systems of therapeutics, viz; Western Medicine, Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani or Homeopathy. I have not the slightest objection to the wide borrowing of tested remedies from all sources and quarters. It is not Europe alone that has contributed. From the Cinchona bark (Quinine) to R. serpentine (serpasil) the Tropics have contributed generously. But there is only one scientific system of Medicine neither East or West. This utilizes all the resources of science, for research, the microscope, the biopsy, the chemistry of cell-growth, the radio-isotope, X-rays, the ECG or the EEGs Apparatus. I feel that scientific methodology must be applied to all the "*systems*" and cures claimed by all schools of practitioner. This is not being done. I would also refer to the urgent need to control advertisements and to the suppression of "*quacks*" trading on credulity.

I would like now to discuss about the problems of the diseases of Adaptation. As HANS SELYE had stressed in his theory of the General Adaptation Syndrome, human beings do try to adapt to stresses of all kinds, external or internal. But beyond a certain point this breaks down and the locus of failure differs with individuals. One gets hypertension, another gastric ulcer, another diabetes (which is much more complex than a mere failure of the Pancreas in carbohydrate metabolism) another colitis, still another punishments of the skin (allergic dermatitis), asthma, or even mental breakdown, the Psychoses. Hence it is essential to treat the person, not the mere illness. I would deprecate reliance on more proprietary drugs and biochemical tests, however, valuable the latter may be as indices, to the exclusion of clinical acumen. Medicine can never be computerized, for the reason that acumen cannot be fed into the computer.

According to a recent school of behaviourists both inner and outer stresses stem from the fact that almost all men are either manipulators or victims of manipulations (manipulators). The real discovery is that passivity and submissions or repression lead to Adaptive disease, even more than

aggression does. Literally passivity lead to inward resentment which manifest itself in forms of pathological maladjustments.

Finally I would refer to the Hippocratic oath, which is a privilege and a stringency. Of the three 'learned professions'. Education, Law and Medicine, the third is perhaps the noblest. I wish the Academy statutory recognition and all success.

I offer my heartiest felicitations to the new Fellows and Members on their election to the Academy and I feel privileged to present them with their well deserved scrolls.