CHAPTER 5
THE SYSTEM OF HEALING

a) Diagnostic Methods:
A person can be declared as borona, roge zala, or jevak bore disna, (illness) under certain conditions. A healthy person may get an accidental cut on his body, which is promptly treated with zhādeapālačē vokod (herbal medication). Through the condition calls for a medical remedy, it is not treated as a case of illness. But had the same cut festered on the body without proper care, and caused a swelling with a pus or fever, the person would not be in a position to participate in the routine activities of labour. Now the person is said to be ill. He is removed from labour, because the condition of his body is not normal, like that of the others. It is only when illness in the form of roge or Nodrečē or varyace affects the normal work of an individual that he can be termed as ill.

A sickperson does not call himself ill. He is confronted by family and neighbours who tell him that he should not participate in work. He needs rest to recover from his condition. It is the community that terms him ill.

The community legitimately exempts sick people from certain social relationships. On the contrary the family members assume additional responsibilities on their behalf.[1]

A number of persons in the community play a significant role in identifying the illness of a persons play a role of healing the patient as well. The people involved in identifying illness
are the budvont, dištikarn voktakarn, ghadi, and the zanțelî (elders) of the family and neighborhood. Among these the budvont, dištikarn, (woman removing evil eye) voktakarn (medicine woman) and the ghadi (shaman) are endowed with special powers to heal.

An illness is a body condition, which can be caused due to any of the three classified causes of illness (roge, nodreţe, variaţe). Illness and disease are two different realities. A disease represents an organ dysfunction, while illness is what the dysfunction means to the sick person.[2] It is the meaning of illness that is important for diagnosis.

Tokli fodta (headache), can be caused due to prolonged exposure to the sun, due to evil eye or due to possession by evil spirits. The very condition of a headache can be due to any one of the causes, for the person who experiences them.

When a person is actually struck by illness such as a headache, the cause cannot be ascertained immediately. The sick man can only say he has a headache. The primary task of the family and neighbours is to find the cause of the headache. The sick person is asked a series of questions. They begin with identification through the person's activity prior to illness.

The questions asked are as follows:

a) What did you eat? b) Where have you come from? c) What work did you do today? d) Were you out in the sun? e) Did you oil your head? f) Did you pass motions today? The sick person is asked to explain how and when his illness began. Based on his
food intake, interaction with people and whereabouts, prior to illness, the diagnosis will be made.

Primitive diagnostics are meant to find natural as well as supernatural causes. Accordingly therapeutics cover herbal to magicoreligious rites.[3]

The first question is regarding the intake of food. Food is thought to cause illness to the biological as well as social body. Evil eye and evil spirits can pass into the body through food. It can cause illness due to evil eye as well as evil spirits.

Based on what information the sick person gives, the family and neighborhood decide the type of illness affecting him. If the sick person has had the wrong food, or has been out in the sun for a prolonged period, the cause is identified as a non-human, non-spirit agent. Whereas if the sick person has not eaten anything untoward, if he has not broken the food consumption code, but if he has come through a lonely area, or if he has met certain women along the way, the cause of illness is taken to be evil eye.

Here the biological body is affected through the social body. The biological body can be affected independent of proper food and living habits. It is incorporated into the social body, which is subject to the influences of evil eye.

In the former case the sick person would be given herbal medication, or advised to take rest. The biological body has to recuperate. In the latter case herbal medication alone does not...
help, because the cause of illness does not lie with the biological body alone. It is through the social body that the biological body has been harmed. As long as the evil eye persists on the social body, the biological body cannot be healed.

Further, if the sickperson continues to suffer from headache even after the removal of evil eye, the cause is attributed to the work of evil spirits. The sickperson has to be taken to the ghadi. Because like the case of the evil eye, the sickperson's social body which also extends to the spirits of ancestors and deities can be affected by them.

The real cause of illness is determined through a successive elimination of causes from non-human, non-spirit agent, evil eye, to evil spirit. The diagnostic procedure does not always follow the sequence. Sometimes there is sufficient reason to suspect evil eye right away. When a sickperson immediately says he had met a particular woman (and if she is known to cause evil eye) the illness affecting him is taken as evil eye. When a person says he returned from a funeral, or was frightened in a jungle prior to the illness, than the case can be attributed directly to the work of evil spirits.

Both evil eye and evil spirits can affect the social body of the person, without affecting the biological body. Here again the illness is identified by the behaviour of the individual. There are no body symptoms, but the person experiences lethargy, fits of violence, body shivers, mutters strange words, has a dazed look on his face, or becomes restless. These are taken to
be signs of possession by evil spirits. But the spirits have affected only the social body. No herbal medication is required here. The person has to be taken to the ghadi or the evil eye has to be removed accordingly.

The ailments affecting the biological body independent of the social body, together classified as roge, have diagnostic methods also. For some diseases the meaning of the disease is its diagnosis also. Others have specific methods for identification.

1. Jaundice (Kamiņ) - When a person shows pale eyes and pale finger nails, the urine is tested for signs of jaundice. A piece of white cloth is dipped in the urine and dried in shade. If the cloth leaves a yellow stain the condition is jaundice.

2. Kidney problem (Nalkut) - If a sick person is suspected of suffering from kidney trouble, he is given a pinch of pepper grains. The size of the stomach is measured before and after eating the grains. If there is a swelling after the administration of pepper the illness is Nalkut.

3. Boils - An out-break of boils have to be carefully watched. They could be rash, measles, chicken-pox, german measles, herps, ring worm or prickly heat. The pattern of appearance is watched.
   a) Boils minute, scattered and bright red: German measles.
   b) Boils small, red and spreading in a linear fashion: herps.
   c) Hives medium, scattered, red: measles.
d) Boils medium, scattered, with blister: chicken-po.x.

e) Boils small, localized, on feet, or hands, with pus formation: rash.

4. Headaches - A headache can be of several types. Some are indicative of other illnesses.
   
a) Dande marta (throbbing headache). This is a sign of high or low blood pressure.
   
b) Jel marta (pain with giddiness) could be due to jaundice.
   
c) Pez yeila (heaviness in the head) due to constipation.
   
d) Ek ordan fønța (one sided headache) due to cold.
   
e) Tokli fønța (not localized, just ache) can be due to fever, or fatigue.

5. Bites - Persons may be bitten by insects in their sleep, in the dark, or in a forest where the grass is abundant giving enough camouflage to the insect or animal.
   
a) Centipede bite: The centipede bites and remains clinging for a few seconds. This makes it easy for identifying the insect.
   
b) Scorpion bite: A scorpion too does not move away quickly after a bite, giving time for identification.
   
c) Snake-bite: Snakes strike at the victim and move away quickly. Snake-bites are commonly identified by the teeth marks on the flesh. Poisonous snakes leave a two fang marks on the skin. The type of poisonous snake is identified by tasting the poison. (see cure, pg.9)

Perhaps zhado is the most elaborate diagnostic procedure,
and a cure incorporated into one therapy. Through the zhado the, zhadekar can know whether there is poison in the body, the amount of poison in the body, and he can stop the poison from reaching the head.

From the few examples of identification of illness we can arrange the diagnostic pattern for the three categories of illness as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATURE OF INTERACTION (CAUSE)</th>
<th>ROOE</th>
<th>NODRECE</th>
<th>VARIACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malafide interaction</td>
<td>Malafide interaction with nature.</td>
<td>Malafide interaction with community and deities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFFECTED PART</th>
<th>Biological body</th>
<th>Biological body through social body</th>
<th>Biological body or social body only.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>through social body or social body only.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTIC</th>
<th>Illness with plausible explanation</th>
<th>Sudden illness with no immediate explanation</th>
<th>Sudden illness, sudden changes in behaviour, no immediate explanation</th>
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</thead>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSATIVE AGENT</th>
<th>Non-human agent</th>
<th>Human agent</th>
<th>Spirit agent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-spirit agent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURE</th>
<th>!Zhādeāpālaē</th>
<th>Dišt kadop</th>
<th>Ghaḍiapōn (removal of evil spirit)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(herbal medi-</td>
<td>(removal of evil-eye).</td>
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b) Collection and dispensing of medicine

Medicines for the respective illnesses can be collected and stored in advance or have to be collected and administrated fresh. The curative procedure begins with the collection of the medicine itself. Strict regulations are of to be observed from
The agents who are involved with the collection of medicines observe a rigid code of conduct, both in their personal behaviour and in their interaction with nature from where all medicines come. Herbal medicines can be collected by both men as well as women, but actual collection is done by the women. The number of women collecting medicines far out number the number of men who collect them. The number of women dispensing medicine are also far larger than the men too.

Among the women, collectors there are some who are known to have the hast'gun (healing touch), these collectors are known as such Voktakarn (medicine women). Men who have such qualities are known as the Voktākar. Though all can collect medicines, not all can dispense them. A girl and a boy cannot dispense medicine. Rather on the instruction of the medicine woman, they can collect the medicine.

There are procedures to be followed while collecting medicines. Some medicines can be collected at particular time of the day, particular season of the year, and on particular days of the week. Others can be collected at anytime of the year without restriction of day or time. Medicines for illnesses like fever, jaundice muscle pain (due to fall) can be collected at any time. Whereas medicines for piles, worms, dog-bite, kidney problem have definite collection time. The illnesses which would require immediate medication (jaundice, fever) are the ones where medicines can be collected at anytime. Piles, dog-bite, kidney problem, worms have to be treated at length. Medicines for these
can be collected only on particular days.

Certain plant parts like barks, roots and leaves which can be collected and stored, are obtained in the proper seasons. Leaves are collected after the monsoon, as they are fresh, large and plentiful. Barks are collected in summer when they are dry and easy to chip off. Roots too are to be collected towards the end of the monsoon as the soil is soft at this time. These are medicines which can be taken in their dry form. The same medicines may be taken in a fresh form too if readily available. Some however are taken only dry. Kiraite (Andrographis paniculata) decoction against worms can be had from fresh leaves if they are available and needed. The same leaves can be collected dried and preserved for future use. Porpoto (Oldenlandia corymbosa) used to bring down fevers, should be collected only after the herb has dried in the fields. The dried herb can be stored for future use.

Although medicines are preserved in advance, they are still collected with strict ritualistic fervor. The women collect firewood from the nearby forests, throughout the year. During these daily trips they also collect the medicines. As a result they do not have to make special visits to the forests for the sake of medicines. They can also space the time period from one day of collection to another.

If medicines have been collected on Wednesday, the next day for collection would be Sunday. Some women do not go to collect fire-wood on Sunday. Those who do, collect on Wednesday and
Sunday. Others collect them on Monday and Thursday. Thus there is an ecological theme related to the collection of medicines. The spacing of collection days avoids haphazard collection and ensures a constant supply from one year to another.

Dispensing medicines to the sickpersons is done with equal ritualism as collection. Medicine women have to be secretive as part of the procedure of dispensing medicine. Illness have several medications at time. A fever can be brought down using Adathoda, or Oldenlandia leaves. Jaundice can be cured with two types of decoctions and kamin lasop (burning of jaundice). The people know the remedies for the respective illnesses. When they are actually ill, the medicine woman will not reveal the type of medicine given. She cannot and should not because her healing power is linked to the secrecy of the medicine.

The sickperson thus, despite having knowledge of medicines will not have any knowledge of which medicine is actually being administered to him/her. If the medicine is known to the sickperson it is said vokod baadona (medicine has no effect). When there is a single remedy for an illness, like Sorpi (herpes). The sickperson is told that the remedy being given is different from that which is commonly available. The sickperson takes the remedy not knowing that it is the same medicine which he already knows.

Some ailments can be treated through self medication: A wound can be dusted with turmeric, a sickwoman suffering from a nagging cough can make her own cusument (decoction of ginger and
medicinal seeds), for a cold one can make a cosai (coconut juice boiled with crushed coriander and jaggery). Such medications consist of household condiments, or they are included under food preparations also. When such items have to be used to treat illness they can be prepared by the sick person or the family. There is no need of medicine woman's intervention.

There are some medicines which are not available to the people of Bārādi because they do not lie on their firewood collection routes. They have to be obtained from further treks along the forest. The women cross paths with other groups of women from nearby Fatorpa, Ornānt, Ouitel and Bongī. They also know the medicine women from these villages. They have intricate knowledge of what illnesses the respective medicine women treat. When there is need for the treatment of those illnesses the respective medicine woman is consulted immediately.

Medicine men and women may also have the healing power for certain specific illnesses only. A zhaḍekar (person who performs the zhado) has the healing gift for zhado, he does not dispense other medicines. Others give treatments for dog-bites only. Each medicine woman gives treatments for a limited number of illnesses only. It is not because they do not possess knowledge of other medicines or that they are unable to obtain medicines. Each will dispense medicines for which she possesses the healing power.

Likewise a dištikarn (woman who removes evil eye) can perform a curative ritual only for cases of evil eye. A Ghadi gives cures only for cases of illnesses caused by evil spirits.
DUKŚIRI (Hemidesmus indicus)
ROOT USED IN CASE OF ARTHRITIS

ERAND (Dysoxylon binectariferum)
crushed leaves to relieve pain.

KUDO (Holarrhena antidysenterica)
against diarrhoea, dysentery.

SARPAGANDHI (Rauwolfia serpentina)
PASTE OF FLOWERHEAD AGAINST
SNAKE BITE
Though they have knowledge of another's healing techniques, they do not possess the required healing power to dispense the medicine.

Time is an important factor for dispensing medicine too. As is evident from the treatment given for some illnesses: The best time to perform the zhado is before the sun becomes hot or after sunset. It should be put during the cool hours of the day. Zhado should be put only on a Wednesday.

A medicine for piles is collected on Wednesday, prepared on the same day. The medicine should be given on an alternate Sunday only. As the medicine has to be made with fresh plant parts all the doses cannot be given to the sickperson all together. The medicine woman has to prepare them on Wednesday and give them on Sunday. Which means the sickperson has to collect the medicine personally on every alternate Sunday.

Treatment for Vaydeman (palpitation) is to be taken on Wednesday and Sunday only. A treatment for jaundice is to be given on Wednesday only. For skin afflictions like herps, ring worm and eczema medicines are to be taken before sunrise and after sunset.

Perhaps the best example of the significance of time for dispensing medicine is that of the treatment of dog-bite with sađe-sati. This medicine can be given but before the 90th day. The efficacy of the medicine depends on taking it at the right time. Medicine taken before or after the specified time can act as a poison in the body.
Likewise removal of dist, and the burning of foḍki (alum) are done on particular days. Ghadiapon is done on Wednesday and Sunday. Emergency cases of dist and ghadiapon can be handled as they are required by the sick person. The days assigned for the curative rituals are auspicious days.

Time is an important factor in the overall lifestyle of the Bārāḍkars. There is a right time for every activity. There is time for work, rest, and worship. Collective ceremonies are to be held at invocations for opening the way to the Meḷḷ cannot commence without all the male members being present. The right time because that time when all the members are present.

Performance of rituals have their time too. Šimo katrop (ritual sacrifice in honour of the Hapāhi) should be held in the early hours of the morning. Ritual meals like that of the Feṭi should be held before sunrise. A share of the meal had during the soṭi, is distributed to the neighbouring houses before day break. These are but some of the many examples where the Bārāḍkars observe time regulations.

The same observances of time are followed in medical practices too. Doing the right at the right time ensures harmonious relations with nature, community, and the deities.

Appropriate time is an essential characteristic of the system of Ayurveda as reflected in all Indian systems of medicine. It is an act of maintaining equilibrium of the body with nature.[4]
Good health is related to all the three. The belief is reflected in the administration of medicine. No medicine woman collects medicines besides the auspicious days. If sick people come for medicines on non auspicious days, they are told to return on the following auspicious day.

Medicines given by the medicine woman, are either to be applied externally or taken internally. Except in the case of zhado, where the zhadekar performs the beating of the twings all around the sick person. In the removal of evil-eye and removal of evil spirits, the medication is in the form of a performance. The distikarn performs the act of removing the dist. She moves around the sick person, making swinging movements, feigning the removal of the evil eye. The chillies and the liquor are caressed all over the boy of the sick person, and thrown into the tile simulating the dragging of an object from the body to the tile.

The ghadi's performance is even more dramatic. He sits for the trance. His incantations begin with a soft basal voice. Head swinging, and body jerking he proceeds, swallowing a lighted wick of fire. The jerks, and swinging movements remain throughout the trance often slapping his chest, legs and back (see chp.6).

The two above performances are an essential part of the treatment. Ghadiapon is not complete without the performance of the ghadi. Evil eye cannot be removed without the simulations of the woman who removes the evil eye.

Medicine for the biological body is given internally or as external applications. Afflictions of the social body are treated
through the performances. The medicine is dispensed as the performance itself.

c) The process of Healing:

In order to go through the process of healing, one need not necessarily be declared as sick. Among the Bāriḏkars there are certain conditions of the body which need medications but the individual as such is not treated as a sick person. A cut on the body needs to be treated with medicines. Yet the condition of a cut on the body does not make a person sick.

Though he is not sick he needs healing. The body is injured. Despite the injury the individual is in a position to carry out normal work. His condition though it requires healing, does not remove him from the labour process. So although he is not declared sick, he needs to be healed.

For those who are declared sick, healing begins with the biological body. If illness due to result of the diagnosis points to illness due to non-human, non-spirit agent, or evil eye or evil spirits. It is the first biological body that is sought to be healed. When the illness affects only the social body, like certain cases of evil eye and evil spirit possession, it is healed through the therapeutic performances of the diṭṭikarn and the ghaḍi. There are cases when the sickperson is known to suffer from an illness like a headache, caused due to (roge) non-spirit non-human agent. From the series of diagnostic questions; it may be established as a case of roge. But actual confirmation will take place only when the patient responds to the treatment given.
If for reasons unexplained, the patient does not respond to the medicine, the focus of the cause shifts to evil eye or evil spirits.

Though both have equal probability the sickperson is tried for evil eye. If he responds to herbal medicine after the removal of evil eye, the case is then confirmed as evil eye. If the sickperson does not show any improvement even after removal of evil eye, the final alternative is to try a cure from the ghadi. The illness is thought to be due to possession by an evil spirit. If the herbal medicine acts on the sickperson, after the removal of the evil spirit, the case is confirmed as possession by the spirit.

When only the social body is affected by the human or spirit agent, there is no need of herbal medicine. This distinction has to be brought out clearly, because healing practices have to be conducted according to the aspect of the body which has been affected. When the social body only has been affected it is said that the tokli (head) has been affected. The condition is called tokle (pertaining to head). For such an illness the cure is the removal of evil eye or the removal of the spirit.

This social body symbolized through head, has a certain control over the functioning of the biological body. Whereas the biological body is subject to the functioning of the social body. This body can be affected by members of the community, the deities and spirits. Interaction with the community, and the
spirits bears a relationship on the biological body of every member of the society.

The body of every Bārāḍkar is thus believed to be linked to the members of the community (vangoḍ) and influenced by other Bārāḍkars, their deities and spirits. The mechanisms of their culture play a significant role in healing. Through the biological body may be affected independent of the social body, it is constantly and inevitably under the influence of the social body. The Kuṇbi use analogy of a number of symbolisms for bringing about cures. These are seen in the medications used for all these categories of illness. Listed below are some examples where symbolisms are used as means of cure;

1. Symbolisms in cure for the biological body:
There are those symbolisms drawn from the hot and cold model of food. Tengli, radish, papaya, jackfruit, pumkin, ragi, are hot foods. Bananas, cucumbers, cocum, rice conjee, urrac, red and green bhaji, are cold foods.

When a hot food leads to a stomach upset, a cold food should be given during the next meal and vice versa.

There are illnesses caused when the body becomes cold or hot. There are illnesses on the otherhand which make the body hotter or colder. Asthma makes the body colder. The sickperson cannot be given cold food. Dihoerrea, jaundice, and dysentry make the body hotter. Sickpersons suffering from these diseases should be given only cold foods. Stomach upsets are caused when the stomach gets heated with hot food. Urrac is cold, and has to be
rubbed on the stomach. The tendli vegetable gives a stomach upset, tendli leaves have to be rubbed on the stomach. Tendli are hot, but the tendli leaves are cold. Crushed tendli leaves can help cool the stomach. This remedy cannot be used for upsets caused by other foods.

Paralysis of the limbs is brought about when the blood in the body becomes cold. The blood of a pigeon is hot, and should be rubbed on the body of the sick person to heat his own blood. The blood of the gaar (monitor lizard) is hot and is given to people suffering from asthma to heat the body. Colour symbolisms are used in medicine too.

Jaundice make the body yellow. All foods that are yellow are avoided. Foods like the mango, papaya, pumpkin, and egg being yellow are also avoided. To remove evil eye a black chicken is used. When blood is not available a red cloth piece is offered to the spirit.

Bites from a cat, rat, scorpion, and leather shoe-bites are treated with a paste of the ashes of the respective animal. Shoe bites from leather have to be treated with the ashes of leather. Bones of the dead animals are thought to heal the wound.

2. In the removal of evil eye the items used to remove the evil influence are taken through an analogy. The properties of Alum, chillies, liquor throwing salt in the fire, burning at the cross roads, all have symbolic relevance to the removal of evil eye. A typical example of a symbolic gesture in removal of evil eye is
making a new garment "old" by tearing a strip of cloth. This is a prevention against evil eye. Though the person with the potential to cause evil eye may think that the garment is new, she cannot affect the nearer because irrespective of the appearance the garment is old.

3. To avoid illness caused by evil spirits people use parts of animals such as tiger's claws, hog hair, porcupine quills. The ghadi himself uses a number of objects to obtain his powers. The use of body parts of the dead, like bones, teats, hair, help him to call on the spirits. Offering fowl's blood to the spirit to represent human blood, and when that is not available, a piece of red cloth is offered. (see Chp.6).

The budvont himself takes on the role of a healer during the Meṣṣ. He performs rituals as part of collective healing. These are symbolic, as he is representing the community he performs them on their behalf.

The use of the quantity seven in medicine deserves mention. There are preparations made with seven roots (jaundice), or 7 1/2 portions of medicines (sade-sati for dog-bites). Medicines for jaundice and skin infections are to be taken for seven days. One can get jaundice or herps seven times. The illness can occur in seven different ways. The quantity of seven is taken as symbolic of making a complete whole. Including seven medicines in the preparation taking it seven times and so on, ensures complete effect of the medicine, in a symbolic manner.

The Bărăḍkars have also absorbed a number of symbols
throughout history. Some of these are used in healing. During the Meṣy a number of such symbols come to the forefront. The maand becomes a sacred place for healing, with the placement of the linga, the national flag, the divili. The Budvont pours oil over the linga and plants the flag at the maand (see Meṣy). This maand is made sacred by these symbols. Sick people queue to get the healing touch of the budvont.

The Cross has been absorbed as a symbol for healing, it is treated as one of the deities, and referred to as Tho (He). The Cross is invoked along with the deities before the sick people make their vows. After the Budvont pours the oil on the linga and the ancestor's stones, all sick people newly wedded and pregnant women repeat it. The appeasement of the ancestors through the stones ensures good health.

The ghādi invokes several deities and spirits to help him on his spiritual voyage. These deities include the Babbar Pir, and the Holy Cross. These two "deities" have been inducted into the pantheon of other older pre-christian deities. The ghādi requests the help of the deities to remove the evil influence of the spirits causing illness to his clients. Among the things that the ghādi asks the sickpersons to do, some are specifically meant for the Babbar Pir and for the Holy Cross. He asks sick people to light candles at Crosses, and offer prayers to the Pir, through the Muslim priests. (see Chp.6). Just as symbols have been borrowed through time, and used as part of the healing tradition, so also has baile vkod (allopathic medicine) been borrowed to make it a part of the healing system. Many skin ailments are
treated with ointments and removal of evil-eye. The following is a typical case of the use of allopathic medicine along with their own system of medicine: A woman was suffering from a skin infection. She had a rash on her feet. Her family treated her with herbal medicine. The rash did not heal. They began to suspect evil eye. Meanwhile some suggested bailem vokod (allopathy). She was taken to the doctor who gave her an ointment. The following day she was taken to the woman who removes evil eye. The herbal medication consisting of boram leaves and raw rice continued twice a day.

After a week's time the sores began to heal. The cause of the illness was attributed to evil eye, as the healing progressed after removing it. The allopathic ointment was included in the healing procedure. The medicine was meant for cure of rash, and causation of illness had not changed. Removal of evil eye was seen just as necessary as the use of herbal mixtures and the ointment.

Just as the Bārādkars have incorporated symbols into their culture, they have also incorporated allopathic medicines into their system of medicine. The Bārādkars use a system of medicine synthesized with the various elements assimilated throughout history.

Elements from different cultures such as the Holy Cross, Babbar Pir, allopathic medicines, the Shiva linga, all form part of the healing system. The Mejj is perhaps one fine example where
elements of culture interplay with healing practices. Rituals held during the Melt are for the well-being of the entire community. The Melt itself becomes an elaborate healing ceremony, where the social body is healed and further protected collectively.

There are certain conditions which are essential to healing:

1) The sickperson should have complete faith in the healing powers of the respective healer. Family and relativeship to build up the sickperson faith. Not so much because they themselves are convinced, but because the remedies have to work on the sickperson.

2) Medicines should be collected at the right time. The sickperson should take the medicines at the right time. Performances which are part of the therapy of healing should be performed at the auspicious time. Cures dispensed for illnesses like jaundice, pile and dog-bites, depend upon time as a crucial factor for healing. These medicines have to be collected by the medicine woman at the right time and handed over to the patient at the right time. These procedures being dependent on time take almost a ritualistic form.

3) Space is another important factor which plays an important role in healing. Therapies like the zhado and ghadiapon can be held only at particular spaces. The sacred spaces cannot be created anywhere else. Sick people have to go to house of the respective healer. A woman who removes evil-eye comes to the house of the sickperson, because she can create the sacred space there. In order to create the sacred space she
has to isolate the sickperson in the most scheduled spot in the house. After having recited the initial incantations the space becomes sacred. It can be used for removing the evil-eye. If an any other individual chances to enter this space, the secrecy is lost. The incantations have to be repeated once again.

4) The medicines have to be collected and administered in secrecy. Ethnographers have long reported the importance of secrecy for the workings of magical acts. Here secrecy is an important condition for effectivity of medicines. A medicine woman, should not disclose the names of the medicines she is going to give. By for she should collect medicines alone. If she discloses the names of medicines, it is said that vokod baadona (medicine has no effect). Most people in the community have good knowledge of the medicinal plants used. Yet the medicine woman tells the sickperson that she has made a preparation using other plants. She knows that the patient is likely to identify the plants used. When she says has used some other plants the sickperson believes her. He has gone to her because he has total faith in her healing powers. Thus the condition of secrecy is established by the medicine woman for the sickperson.

These conditions have to be met in order to heal the sickperson. Else as the Bārāḏkars say vokod baadona, (medicine has no effect) medications cannot heal, except under the required circumstances.

d) The place of Health among the Kuni bi :

For the Bārāḏkars health is not the mere normal functioning of
the individual body. The focus of good health extends beyond the body of the individual to the community. Anv jeuan bora ahā (I am in good health) is secondary to amge lok jeuan bore aha (our people are in good health). The social body, which is subject to the influences of community relations, and relations between spirits, is the principle around which health beliefs are organized.

When the community suffers from ill health, a Bārādkar (not suffering from illness) will not talk about his good health. On the contrary the concern is about those who are suffering. When their own kuṭumā members are sick, one cannot consider oneself as enjoying good health. The health of the community is inseparably linked to one's own health. One could never know when one's own body would be affected by the same illness.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the boundary of the body extends to the entire community. The Kunbi body is a corporate body, defined and experienced through the community. As such when the Kunbi say Amge log boro aha (our people have good health) it also means Anv borro aha (I am in good health). When a member(s) of the kunṭumā falls sick, the social body of the members is affected. Their biological body shows normal functioning. Such individuals are not removed from the daily labour routine, and hence are not identified as borona (sick). However since their family and vango members are in a sick state, by definition they cannot identify themselves as enjoying good health. Rather, the corporate nature of the body is brought out when the Kunbi say
our people are not in good health first.

Good health for the community also implies that ancestors and deities have been pleased. The body social can be assured of good health only through the collective rituals during Feti, Meël, and garant adop (bringing the ancestor home).

Rituals have healing properties for a corporate group. Individual health is restored only when the afflictions of the corporate body is corrected.[6]

The rituals have to be performed collectively by all vangod members. They have no meaning if some of the vangod members are not present. Each member partakes in the proceedings in a symbolic manner, because the budvont performs a number of acts on behalf of the vangod. The individual's participation in the rituals, contributes to the community's health. The collective participation of the community on the other hand contributes towards the health of the individual.

The Bāṛāḍkars though using a number of symbols, charms and amulets which avoid illnesses, believe that it cannot be avoided together. It is a part of life. The body is affected by forces of nature, the community the spirits and ancestors. Their influence over the body can be regulated but cannot be eliminated. The Shaḍi or the Budvont has no method by which they can permanently keep these influences away. There is no method for destroying spirits and ancestors. They too are an inseparable part of life. Disease cannot be avoided. It may be cured.
Finally health and the pursuit for good health is a moral responsibility. One that binds the community together. It's little wonder that collective rituals are given such great importance. They form an underlying collective health programme.

References:


PROTECTIVE SYMBOLS AGAINST DISEASE

FOPKI (ALUM) IN THE NECK AGAINST EVIL EYE

BLACK BANGLES AND BEADS IN THE NECK AGAINST EVIL EYE

PAPAVEL (Cissampleos pereira) IN CASE OF SORE EYES

GOSIA VOKOD AGAINST CONSTIPATION

TUMQ (Leucas aspera) AGAINST ASTHMA

SAPUS (Aristolochia indica) AGAINST VOMITING Indian Sarsaparilla