CHAPTER 4

THE PHILOSOPHY, PRINCIPLES AND DIAGNOSTIC METHODS OF NATURE CURE SYSTEM

4.1 Introduction

Nature Cure has the support of everyday experience and an elemental philosophy. Let us have a look at the human body before and after death. When the body was alive and could function normally, microbes were powerless to do any serious harm to it. But in the dead body, they are able to prey upon the blood and flesh and reduce it to a mass of putrefaction very soon. The numerous distinct organs of the body function of their own accord without effort or even knowledge on our part. And they function very well in spite of handicaps and the body lives for a considerable time.

4.2 The philosophy of the Nature Cure System

Any science or branch of knowledge has a philosophy of its own. Such a philosophy explains the nature, meaning and the system of that thought. It is an investigation into the nature, laws, principles and objectives of that science. Thus we have Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Religion, Philosophy of History etc. Similarly there is a basic Philosophy for Nature Cure too.

Nature Cure can be considered as a system of treatment using natural agents and forces of Nature to bring about the desired cure. Naturopaths rely on natural products such as herbs, vegetables and fruits, rather than synthetic or chemical drugs and surgery. This
system of health care basically believes that the whole cosmos is made up of the *Panchamahabhutas* (the five great elements) of Nature. Various beings of this cosmos are nothing but various combinations and permutations of these five elements of Nature. Man also is not an exception to this law of Nature. Accordingly the World is called Macrocosm and Man a Microcosm. Their constituent elements are the same. Their combinations and permutations only may differ.

According to Indian understanding, the Nature or even an atom has the five elements. These are Earth, Water, Sunlight, Air and Ether. Corresponding to these five elements men has five senses and five sensations.

The Basic 5 elements and Corresponding 5 senses and their sensations are:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Element</em></th>
<th><em>Sense</em></th>
<th><em>Sensation</em></th>
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<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Skin</td>
<td>Touch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Tongue</td>
<td>Taste</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunlight</td>
<td>Eyes</td>
<td>Sight</td>
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<td>Air</td>
<td>Nose</td>
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<td>Ether</td>
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This chart points to the clear and distinct relation of man with Nature as part of the Nature and the need to live in harmony with Nature. The life in harmony with Nature promotes a healthy and happy living. If the Nature is disturbed or distorted, it will violently react to us. This is the fundamental philosophy of Nature Cure.
The human body is protected by some mysterious power and when this power abandoning the body, it is destroyed by the action of the microbes. Let us consider the phenomenon of an invisible speck of life coming into existence in the mother’s womb; later it becomes endowed with a head and limbs, and in the tenth month comes out as a complete baby. What is the actual power behind it? How does the essence of food become assimilated into the living body structure and the great variety of its tissues? All these work together in coordination for making life possible. On and often we are attacked by various diseases; What is the cause for this? It is an undeniable fact that one who expands his vital power attains all the blessings of a happy life and he who does not become unhappy. An individual can rebuild physical health and mental equilibrium, if he learns to live in tune with the spontaneous rhythm (spanda) of the cosmos.1

Life works in the body in a subtle way along with the mind and sense organs and faculties of action.2 It is the vital power or ‘pranasakthi’ that joins together our mind and body. The life force varies in the body in a subtle way according to the body’s capacity to receive it.

The natural healing science is based on commonsense and is not founded upon a gamble with human life. It developed along natural and infallible laws which work towards human welfare and which will always work satisfactorily, unless these laws are trampled on by the application of unnatural and artificial agents. The leading
axioms of Nature Cure as a science is briefly explained as the unity of disease and the unity of cure.³

**The unity of disease**

There is only one cause for diseases however they manifest themselves in various forms and in different degrees of severity. The root cause of disease is the violation of natural laws.⁴ Whatever be the malady, remember that disease is a unit, it is the unit of transgression, whether such transgression has been conscious or unconscious. In reality, all diseases are the self purifying efforts on the part of Nature. “Give me fever and I can cure every diseases”⁵, said Hippocrates.

According to Dr. Henry Lindlahr, ‘Every acute disease is the result of a cleansing and healing effort of Nature, and he says further that if you suppress the acute condition by drugs or by any other means, you are simply laying the foundation for chronic diseases.⁶ Making a general application of this law, we deduce that all diseases right from simple cold to skin eruptions, diarrhoea, fever etc. represent Nature’s effort to remove the accumulated impurities. From the entire body system.

**Unity of cure**

By nature human beings are healthy. The body possesses its own inherent ‘self curative’ forces. Within every living body there are sufficient resources of vitality to overcome temporary illness caused by
other circumstances. As soon as the materials and other conditions necessary for its restoration to health are provided, the body immediately carries out its plan of reconstruction and health follows as a natural corollary. Animals instinctively make use of this vital force when they become ill and work with Nature towards the natural restoration of their well being.

With regard to the so-called hereditary diseases, Nature Cure maintains and has demonstrated that if a child is treated according to the Nature Cure philosophy, abnormal encumbrances and tendencies can be eliminated in a few years. When an infant is given the right treatment and living conditions in harmony with the Nature, the life-principle within it will have an opportunity to cause its development to a greater extent than in the case of an adult under similar favourable conditions.

The core of Nature Cure is to make every human being aware of the philosophy of the preservation of fitness by the powers within him and by the obedience to the laws of Nature, not only as appertaining to the body, but also to the laws regarding a constructive and healthy mentality and spiritual attitude.

We can conclude that Nature Cure declares that the laws of Nature are immutable and infallible, that sickness proceeds from some specific violation of Nature, that pain is a penalty of wrong doing and suffering a warning against transgression. The cure consists first in
removing the cause, second in preventing its occurrence; third in empowering the individual to regulate his own life. In short Nature Cure claims that the healthy life is a ceaseless unfoldment of the soul and that the development of man proceeds from within.

4.3 The Panchabhutas

According to the traditional understanding, the universe has taken origin from avyakta, which literally means unmanifested. This concept of avyakta includes both the purusha (conscious element) and the prakriti (primordial matter) of sankhya darsana. From, this avyakta, the entire universe takes origin as detailed in the following chart.

\[\text{AVYAKTA} \rightarrow \begin{array}{c} \text{MAHAN (INTELLECT)} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{AHANKARA (EGO)} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{SATVIK} \quad \text{RAJASIK} \quad \text{TAMASIK} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{FIVE SENSES FACULTIES} \quad \text{FIVE MOTOR ORGANS} \quad \text{MANAS/MIND} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{GANDHA} \quad \text{RASA} \quad \text{RUPA} \quad \text{SPARSA} \quad \text{SABDA} \\
\text{(PRITHVI)} \quad \text{(JALA)} \quad \text{(TEJAS)} \quad \text{(VAYU)} \quad \text{(AKASA)} \end{array}\]
The Nature Cure is based on *panchabhutas* which, constitutes this macrocosm (*Mahuprapancham*) and the microcosm (*Cheruprapancham*) man.

Man has five senses and through these sense he contacts the external world in five different ways. These sense organs are the ears, skin, eyes, tongue and the nose. Through these sense organs the external objects are absorbed. The entire universe is divided, grouped or classified into five different ways and they are known as five *mahabhutas* or *panchabhutas*.\(^9\)

Modern Physics and Chemistry have divided the matter of the universe into some basic elements. These elements differ from each other in certain points. But all these elements are included in the *panchabhutas*. In fact the whole world and the innumerable things of the world are all nothing but the various combinations and permutations of *Panchabhutas*. In the normal body of a living being, the substances remain in a particular proportion. However, because of enzymatic action inside the human body, this ratio of five *mahabhutas* or their equilibrium inside the body gets disturbed. The body has a natural tendency to maintain equilibrium. It supplies the *mahabhutas*, which are in shortage. This shortage is replenished through the ingredients, which we take. The exogenous *panchabhutas* are converted into endogenous *panchabhutas* through the process of digestion and metabolism\(^{10}\). Even in the case of death, these five categories of subtle *bhutas* inside the body which mutilate the five
senses ad thus death occurs. The body is composed of *panchabhutas* closes he five senses and goes into a state of decomposition during death.

Substances that are heavy, tough, hard, stable, nonslimy, dense and aromatic are dominated by *prītvī* (earth). They promote plumpness, compactness, heaviness and stability. Substances that are liquid, cold, dull, soft, slimy and abounding in the qualities of taste are dominated by *jala* (water). They promote stickiness, compactness, moistness and softness. Substances that are hot, sharp, subtle, light, nonslimy and abounding in the qualities of vision are dominated by *tejas* (sunlight). They promote combustion, metabolism, luster, radiance and colour. Substances that are light, cold, rough, nonslimy, subtle and abounding in the qualities of touch are dominated by *vāyu* (air). They promote roughness, aversion, movement, nonsliminess and lightness. Substances that are soft, light, subtle smooth and abounding in the qualities of sound are dominated by *akāsa* (ether). They promote softness, porosity and lightness.¹¹

In short, from time immemorial, Indians were well educated and experienced in health science. The Holy Scriptures demonstrate how a strict adherence to he directives given therein will secure man total health and Supreme Bliss. ² They show us the path of right living in harmony with Nature.
4.4 The Principles of the Nature Cure System

Nature Cure is a way of life, which teaches us how to lead a healthy and peaceful life. Most of its techniques aim to keep the body free from physical ailments. It lays more emphasis on personal hygiene. In fact, it defines health in terms of cleanliness. Modern medical science has accepted that this is true, as far as external surroundings are concerned; but it has not yet applied this principle to internal conditions. It lays too much emphasis on eliminating toxic morbid matters from the body.

Nature Cure believes that the seed or spores of germs and bacteria can grow and multiply only in waste and morbid matter. Therefore Nature Cure prescribes the regular cleaning and purification of the body to prevent the growth of germs and bacteria. The Nature Cure practitioner does not fill the body with poisonous drugs to kill the germs and to develop immunity.13 When, we take more food than required it puts undue pressure on the digestive system which results in delayed excretion of waste from the colon, which results in symptoms of ill-health. Elements like albumin, globulin, cholesterol, glucose etc. present in the body, when cross its limits; they become part of the morbid matter of toxins. Through respiration, carbon dioxide is eliminated from the body. Kidneys are responsible for eliminating excess water and toxic substances like urea, uric acid etc. Skin is responsible for eliminating extra heat as well as salts. The fecal matter and undigested matters are ejected through the anus.
Every cell of the body needs oxygen and there is need to eliminate carbon dioxide. The dead cells also must be excreted. When the waste products are more than required, they put extra pressure on lungs, kidneys, skin and the digestive system.\textsuperscript{14}

The excretion of waste matter is extremely essential because, if carbon dioxide is not excreted for days, his life is in danger, even leading to death. If the digestive system is blocked for days, again life is in danger. But the tragedy of the contemporary life is that we don't use lungs properly as we take shallow breathing because of stress and strain. Shallow breathing is not sufficient to purify the blood. This affects the growth of cells.

If the waste products, toxins and morbid matters are accumulated in the body, and its excretory gateways are blocked, Nature helps the body to develop various types of diseases like cough, cold, fever, dysentery, vomiting etc. through which the accumulated waste materials are excreted. The battle between the forces of disease and the healing forces results in the disintegration of tissues, the development of abscesses, boils, fistulas, open sores etc. If the healing forces are stronger and if they are supported by the right treatment, the poisons and the microorganisms will be gradually eliminated.\textsuperscript{15} After these processes the work of reconstruction starts. Thus, if the development of a disease is allowed to run its course, it will prove beneficial to the body because waste products are eliminated through this process.
The principle of natural healing, the unity of disease and unity of Cure meaningful relationship, social functioning individualism etc. are the major principles behind the science of Nature Cure.\textsuperscript{16}

The body contains the vital force, which controls and regulates its normal functioning. There are two important conceptions about vital force. According to the first, it manifests itself in the human organism in the form of electric, magnetic and physiochemical activities of the body. According to the second it is the primary force, which permeates and animates the entire universe and is an expression of divine energy, which sets everything in motion. It resides within the body and its inherent healing power protects the body.

Nature Cure believes that the main cause of a disease is the lowered vitality of the body.\textsuperscript{17} The vitality is lowered with the increase of morbid matter and toxins in the system. According to Dr. Lindlahr return to normal habits and surroundings, which necessitates, economy of vital force and elimination of morbid matter etc includes the principle of unity of treatments.\textsuperscript{18}

The principle of individualization is the fundamental principle of Nature Cure. According to Boethius a person is an individual substance of rational Nature.\textsuperscript{19} Each person's nature is capable of integrating and directing its own forces in a way that is different from that of every other individual. The Nature Cure practitioner view the
problems of each patient in specific terms and thus help him to move forward after finding the most satisfactory techniques.

The principle of meaningful relationship differentiates Nature Cure from other medical sciences like Allopathy, Homoeopathy, Ayurveda etc. In this therapeutic practice, good interpersonal relationship is desirable. It helps the Naturopath to make the patient to state his problems clearly and freely. It also brings to surface other related problems. He is thus able to understand what is happening in the mind of the patient. He tries to share his situation in an emotional plane.20

The principle of social functioning refers to the patient’s social roles and relationship with emphasis on their relation to the environment. This concept involves two-sub concepts – task and coping.21 Task implies the demands made upon patients by various life situations. The concept of coping emphasizes the conscious cognitive and rational aspects of behaviour.

When individual’s behaviour is against Nature, he is punished. He experiences life through his body mind and spirit which constantly pulsate. This vacuum is filled by Nature Cure. Nature Cure is unique in its philosophy that health is normal and simple living in harmony with Nature. Health and disease are continuum – the same physiological laws govern the body in sickness and health. Healing is the result of action undertaken by the body on its own behalf.22 Nature
Cure is for people who are looking for healthy life. It offers the opportunity to live the healthiest and happiest life possible.

Medical school existed to train the student in knowledge of disease and cures. Health is not in the technically professional life of the physician. But Nature Cure gives prime importance for the condition and requirements of health in its theory and practice. To a Naturopath this process is called natural healing. The conditions and requirements of natural healing are the conditions and requirements of life itself. So the laws governing the conditions of health are the same as the laws governing the life.

4.5 Diagnostic Methods of Nature Cure System

Diagnosis is a process of finding out the nature of the physical sickness. It is the process which gives a clear picture of the patient’s complaints and its severity. Some Naturopaths believe that diagnosis is a mere labeling of sickness and there is not need for diagnosis. But it is true that diagnosis should precede treatment whenever possible, but the Naturopath should remember that he also has to help to solve the problems, which his patients have. Labeling a disease is but one step in the management of the patient's problems.

Accuracy in diagnosis is very essential. It is evident that with correct diagnosis and with specific treatment, the risk is considerably avoided. According to Henry Lindlahr, the famous Naturopath, ‘with
all our varied instruments, useful as they are, nothing can replace the watchful eye, the alert ear, the tactful finger and the logical mind'.

A successful Naturopath is supposed to be an all-round diagnostician. For making a correct diagnosis he makes use of modern medical facilities. In addition to these he uses other important methods also. There are osteopathic, chiropractic, spinal diagnosis as well as iridodiagnostic (a method of determining bodily conditions by looking into the iris of the eye), which often reveals conditions in the body that could not be discovered in any other ordinary way.

Nadividya is a traditional method of diagnosis that exists in India. It is a system by which the disease can be diagnosed by feeling the pulse of a patient. Astro diagnosis is a science and art of obtaining scientific knowledge regarding the disease and its causes as shown by the planets as well as the means of overcoming it. It should be studied to understand the individual type or the constitutional, and mental behaviour of the patient. The twelve zodiacal signs constitute the twelve different organs of the 'grand man' known as purusha in the Rig-Veda. According to Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, a man who is ignorant of the science of astrology deserves to be called a fool rather than a physician. Astrology not only helps in diagnosing the physical characteristics but also helps to understand the character of the patient. To diagnose the illness of a patient, the Naturopath examines the pulse rate. The variation in the pulse rate helps to tell the Naturopath, the nature of the disease.
The general assumption is that, all diseases have a common origin in wrong living and that a return to Nature establishes equilibrium. But this does not justify the negligence in determining what is wrong with a patient and to what extent an organ or organism has deteriorated. How shall we ascertain if a given case is beyond Nature's repairing forces? Hence here comes the necessity of a proper diagnosis.

The fact is that most of the medical practitioners often treat their patients symptomatically; but a Naturopath approaches the patient more in tune with the Nature. He adopts various methods of examination and interprets disease in all its forms and details from a Naturopathic point of view. The unity of disease is a fact in Nature. All disorders can be traced back to three primary manifestations namely, (1) Lowered vitality, (2) Abnormal composition of blood and lymph, and (3) Accumulation of waste and toxic substances. It then follows that whatever succeeds in correcting these three underlying causes, removes diseases originated from them.

There are two major steps in making a diagnosis. The first is to establish the clinical features by taking its history, physical examination and proper investigations. The second step is the interpretation of those data in terms of disordered function and structure, and then in terms of pathology. The aim is to elicit an accurate and scientific account of the symptoms and of the clinical
problem as a whole and to set this against the background of the patient’s life.

Identifying information, major complaints, treatment history, physical and medical examination, feelings and attitude development conditions, family history, marital status, habits, personal peculiarities etc. must be noted for a wholistic understanding about the patient. The general appearance of the patient, the hair, the eyes, the face, the mouth, tongue, pharynx, neck, limbs, joints, throat, abdomen, breathing etc. explains the diseased situation. A minute change in the above said condition helps the Naturopath to identify the reason for the patients’ ill health.28

4.6 The Traditional Ayurvedic Methods Used in the Nature Cure System

Nadividya: It is a system of diagnosis by the examination of the pulse. This method is otherwise known as the science of pulse. It is carried out in the morning when the patient is in empty stomach. Pulse examination is prohibited immediately after bath, food, massage etc. Also when a patient is hungry and thirsty, it is not suitable for the purpose of pulse examination.

Urine examination: For this the urine should be collected during the last quarter of the night. If there is dominance of vayu, the urine becomes pale yellow in colour. If kapha is dominant, the urine is
white and there is a lot of foam in it. Yellow or reddish yellow or red colour of the urine indicates the dominance of *pitta*.

**Stool or motion examination:**- If *vayu* is dominant, the stool becomes dry. Yellow colour indicated the aggravation of *pitta* and pale white colour indicates dominance of *kapha*.

**Tongue:**- When *vayu* is aggravated, the tongue is cold and rough. Cracks or bluish red colour is spread in the tongue when *kapha* is dominant. The tongue is white and exceedingly slimy when *pitta* is dominant.

**Voice:**- If *kapha* is dominant, the voice becomes heavy. Clear and sharp voice indicates the dominance of *pitta* and dry and harsh voice indicate *vayu* dominance.

**Skin/Touch:**- The skin will be hot, if the patient has *pitta*. The *vayu* patient has cold skin. The skin becomes moist and wet, if *kapha* is dominant in a patient.

**Eyes:**- The eyes of the patient suffering from *vayu* diseases are dry and smoky. The patient always gets burning sensation inside the eyes. The eyes of the *pitta* patients are yellow in colour.

**Physical Features:**- *Vayu* dominated patients have mostly dry and cracked skin and hair. *Pitta* patients are thirsty and hungry. The *kapha* patients have compact joint bones and muscles.
Modern Naturopathy can apply all the diagnostic methods which have been developed by modern medical systems for a proper and correct diagnosis which is very important in Nature Cure.

In some Nature Cure centres of Kerala, the Naturopaths depend on the modern clinical results such as blood test, stool test, urine test, x-rays, scanning, ECG and so on for identifying or diagnosing the diseases. They even depend on these modalities to find out the improvement of the patient during their treatment periods. The tables representing the normal readings of the physical conditions of a healthy person are included in the Appendix-1.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter vividly presents the philosophical basis of Nature Cure System. The basic philosophy of this system depends on Panchabhutas. The main principle behind Nature Cure is that, Nature is the force behind the healing process; not the physician. The physician is only a catalytic agent in the whole process accelerating the healing process of the nature. There is no prescribed method for diagnosis in Nature Cure because this system believes in the unity of disease ad unity of cure. This is what is being attempted in the nature Cure System, due to the wrong lie style against the Nature. The elimination of that toxic substance is the only method of treatment.
REFERENCE


5. Ibid. p. 40.


12. Chandokyopanishad, 1:1.2.


15 Ibid. p. 92.


17 Lakshmana Sarma K., & Swaminathan S., op. cit. p. 50

18 Henry Lindlahr, op. cit. p. 9.


22 Ibid. p. 33

23 Lakshmana Sarma K., op. cit., p. 334.


26 Lakshmana Sarma K., op. cit. p. 341.

27 Ibid. p. 342.