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EUGENICS IN THE ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE OF ARYAN TRIBES

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Rezumat. Eugenie în vechea cultură indiană a triburilor ariene.

În timpul anului 1500 î. Hr., triburile nomade ale poporului arian au migrat spre subcontinentul indian. Ei au crezut cu tărie în superioritatea lor asupra locuitorilor locali și au ridicat bariere sociale pentru a crea o rasă perfectă. Familia ideală și nașterea (maternitatea) unui fiu, pentru a continua prezența tatălui pe pământ, au fost de mare importanță. Unirea unui cuplu perfect, bărbat și soție, a fost sacră. Ayurveda, care înseamnă literalmente «cunoașterea vieții», a fost infiltrată în religie. Astfel, arienii și-au divinizat opiniile și eugenie au cucerit mintea lor, le-a ajutat să supraviețuiască și la sfârșit le-au condus la izolare, devenind condamnarea lor.

Cuvinte cheie: triburile Ariene, ayurveda, medicina vedică, eugenie, istoria medicinei.

Summary. Eugenics in the ancient Indian culture of Aryan tribes.

During 1500 BC the nomadic tribes of the Aryan people migrated to the Indian subcontinent. They strongly believed in their superiority above the local inhabitants, and raised social barriers to create a perfect race. The ideal family and the birth (motherhood) of a son, as an offspring to continue father's presence in earth, were of great importance. The union of a perfect couple, man and wife, was sacred. Ayurveda, which literally means "knowledge of life" was infiltrated in religion. Thus, Aryans divinised their views and eugenics conquered their minds, helped them to survive and at the end drove them to isolation, becoming their doom.

Key words: Aryan tribes, ayurveda, vedic medicine, eugenics, history of medicine.

Резюме. Евгеника в древнеиндийской культуре арийских племен.

В 1500 году до нашей эры кочевые племена арийского народа мигрировали на индийский субконтинент. Они твердо верили в свое превосходство над местными жителями и подняли социальные барьеры для создания идеальной расы. Идеальная семья и рождение (материнство) сына для продолжения присутствия отца на земле имели большое значение. Союз идеальной пары, мужчины и жены, был священным. Аюрведа, которая буквально означает «знание жизни», проникла в религию. Таким образом, арийцы ослушали свои взгляды, евгеники завоевали их умы, помогли им выжить и в конечном итоге привели их к изоляции, став их осуждением.

Ключевые слова: племена ариены, аюрведа, ведическая медицина, евгеника, история медицины.

Introduction.

The origin of the Indian system of medicine goes back thousands of years. From time immemorial religious and other teachings and philosophy of life propounded by the ancients of the Indian subcontinent were contained in the earliest sacred

books of unknown antiquity, called the Vedas, four in number, Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda. The term "ayurveda" was given to the ancient Indian system of medical sciences, which literally means "knowledge of life", considered to be a branch of the fourth Veda, the Atharvaveda.

Huge information on the subject could be retrieved in Sanskrit documents. The teachings of Ayurvedic medicine have been pieced together through thorough studies of the ancient religious books and other medico-philosophical literature, but mostly from the writings of Charaka the Physician, and Sushruta the Surgeon around the 3rd century BC [1-2].

When the British invaded India in the early 17th century, they had showed a great interest towards the philosophical, religious and scientific perspectives included in the texts of the Sanskrit and Vedas tradition. Soon after, translations of those ancient documents were spread around Europe, mainly by the British, the Germans and the French. Those treatises, mostly by unknown scientific origin, illustrated a way of thinking in the history of medicine which was unknown until then, as a variety of information on the medical art in India during different cultural periods, spanning the almost 15 centuries, reflecting thus a period and place which were for the Europeans a terra nova [3].

The oldest documents of the Vedas, containing a collection of mainly religious texts which have formed the very foundation of the present day of Hindu religion and the Hindu way of life, accumulated vast knowledge from the perception of the great sages over hundreds of years and was propagated from one generation to the next by teacher to student in an unaltered fashion. They were handed down by philosophers-teachers to pupils by word of mouth throughout the ages. The teachers were enlightened sages called Rishis and their teachings are believed to be words of god expressed through them. In the Persian and Indian territories, lived a group of people called "Aryans". This term was used by the Indic inhabitants of the Vedic people in India and Persia as an ethnic label for themselves, and to refer to the noble class as well as to the geographic region known as Aryavarta. In the oldest religious documents of the Aryans, their culture was described, looking like a very organized civilization with their own language (proto-Indo-European in origin), yet their antiquity is to be ascertained [4].

Eugenics is a social mostly maleficent philosophy, which advocates the use of practices aiming to improve the genetic composition of the population. It originated from the Mendelian and Galtonian rules, and is now based on biomedical breakthroughs and genetic science [5-6]. Eugenics includes elements connected to almost every culture and ethnic group. Concerning India, rules of eugenics and improvement of the human species could be traced back to the ancient sacred documents of the Vedic cult. From the writings of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) could be

inferred that Indians developed practices to deliver great energy to their fellow countrymen, in order to achieve a better state of body homeostasis. These rules appeared even stricter in Sanskrit documents and surprisingly in striking forms when compared to other civilizations, and rather obligatory in the terms of employment [6-9].

The Aryan superiority and religious connections

In the history of the first Aryan societies, social structures were based upon the harmonious union of a man with a woman-mother. They shared equal rights under a sacred union. A remarkable point of the emergence of the Aryan superiority at that early existence of the white race was the honor attributed to motherhood and monogamy. Thus faithful women were considered to be equal members within the family. One of the main principles of the civilization of the Aryan tribes was that this race had been privileged from a creator of a superior family, as far as beauty, purity and morality were concerned. In this type of Vedic family the child was regarded as a symbol of happiness as the Rigveda stated [9-11].

During the last period of the Aryan civilization, the people moved upon the shores of Yamuna, approaching that way to Ganges, by migrating from the central and west Asia. Unfortunately, this was the last living place of the Vedic civilization. Aryans did not actually conquer the Indian subcontinent, but they had a strong impact among the local tribes. They had perfected the Sanskrit language and gained respect. But on the other hand, they had set up social barriers between themselves and the other inhabitants. Disease, epidemics, turbulence with the locals (Indus River Civilization), even military conflicts and other hostilities, and the hostile nature of the area (Saraswati River was drying up, catastrophic floods) raised the mortality rates of the population. Furthermore their belief for superiority through a perfect union of man and woman, having as their main purpose healthy births and prosperous life, lead them further to social and territorial isolation. Their wish and desire to have numerous healthy children, forced them to turn towards the divine power. Vedic hymns, prayers and tributes to be heard by the god, testified their cult and despair just before the tribe's disappearance [12-13].

Eugenics, the perfect couple for an ideal family

Manu, the mystical sage-ruler of earth, the head of the mythical dynasties when the universe was born anew according to the ancient Indian cult, set up a number of significant issues regarding the concept of the perfect family. Intense verbalization and expressions included examples like: "a man, who leaves behind children incapable of achieving, looks

like a man who tries to get to the other side of a river with a broken boat". Thus not only a perfect family in appearance was necessary but the achievement of various attainments was also requisite. Marriage, the basis of a natural family, possessed great importance in ancient Indian social life, accompanied by its assorted concepts of morality [9, 13].

In the Vishnu Sutra's legacies, collections of ancient aphorisms about ancient sacred Indian laws, sexual intercourses were not permitted between persons of up to 6th degree of family relationship, and marriage was forbidden for a man with a woman who had red-coloured hair, or whose family did not have any male members, or has been struck by a disease like tuberculosis, epilepsy and leprosy. These explicitly stated written traditions survived over time and their perspectives continue to appear in the Indian literature of Puranas. In this context, the "Codes of Narada", imposed a premarital test to ensure men were married as virgins; their sperm would thus to have been strong, and women should be before the menarche, for exactly the same reason. The man with no seed was considered unworthy to have a wife, or even a woman. Concerning erotic affairs, adultery was considered to cause mingling of the classes and destruction of the species. Sexual intercourse within a married couple was only considered appropriate on specific days. It was believed that the unique days of fertility had been appearing between two periods of natural sterility. According to the highest universal principle, Brahman's tradition, the authenticity of the race was being protected from external interventions. Therefore, the union with inferior beings (other tribes, class demarcation) was an unforgivable mistake. The incessant quest for perfection among the ancient Indian tribes, drove them to isolation and decline [8-9,14].

Discussion

Around 1500 BC, hordes of the semi-barbarian, Sanskrit speaking nomad tribes called "Aryans" poured from Central Asia into north-west Indian subcontinent. Their predisposition towards a "pure" ideal race, and their lust for superiority, firstly gained both territorial and social benefits, but later on this was their doom [8].

Much of the origin of Ayurveda is steeped in mythology. The philosophy of natural sciences was set aside for a religious medicine to conquer people's minds. God's divine, soon became tribes' deification above other races. All other were inferior and unworthy. Even members of their tribes were out-casted in the case of deformities, misbehaviour and severe pathology. The family was the social unit, and a birth was of great importance, especially that of a son.

The culmination of the union between the man and the woman and the all important son in the Aryan's normative marked the significant shift in the woman-marriage-mother axis. The son depicts the perpetuation of the self. The man recreates himself through the shell of his son; an equation necessary for the preservation of both the population and the evolution of the race [8].

As every thriving civilization, Aryan nomadic tribes had a concept of man in his entirety physical, biological, psychological and, spiritual that from their early history became the basis for the study of medicine. Internal medicine, paediatrics, psychotherapy, otorhinolaryngology, general surgery toxicology, geriatrics, the science of virility, anatomy including dissection, physiology, aetiology and pathogenesis, climatology, pharmacology, and surgery, all accompanied by the grace of divine and its cult formed a rather advanced for the era medical frame. Such a therapeutic consciousness was a powerful bond to eugenics [2]. Erotic mood or coupling, affection and love were somehow pointless. The sperm and womb dualism was the only important temper even in their epic poems [14].

Medicine was a craft, under the patronage of gods, with Dyaus the sky god being their chief divinity. Theurgy was soon combined with archaic medicine, and a desire to please the gods in order to avoid disease was apparent. Unlike other civilizations, the earliest textual evidence of medicine was randomly inserted in the corpora of its principal religious literature. Thus eugenics as a main branch of their social behaviour acquired a sacred character [15-16].

Conclusion

Eugenics remains a controversial topic throughout history. Despite the Indo-Persian origins of the Aryan philosophy, rarely have the notions of eugenics in ancient India been studied. Aryans was the greatest example of eugenics' searchers in antiquity, and unfortunately they became the worst example in modernized European continent for the purity's mongers. However, their views stigmatized genetics, marriage and family planning. To cope with eugenics and the way to use it in theory and practice, is currently a matter of perspectives. The highest caution is required, a distance from religious superstition is needed and a scientific only approach is mandatory for our moral perishing to be avoided.

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- Figures**
1. A map of languages spoken around 10th century BC, Trautmann T. R., Yoda Press, New Delhi, 2006.
 2. A harmonic family, Kalyan Chalukyan temple sculpture, Alampur.
 3. Wanderings of the Aryan Tribes, illustration from "The Illustrated History of the World", Ward Lock, ca 1880 AD
 4. An early 20th-century depiction of Aryan tribes settling in agricultural villages in India, in proximity to Ganges river.