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Integrating Ayurveda and Modern Medicine

By **A.P. Jayadevan**



Dr. Harsha Gramminger



Prof. Dr. Stefan Brunnhuber



Dr. Parvatheedevy

Dr. Harsha Gramminger is a medical doctor and engineer specializing in production technology. She completed extensive training in Ayurveda medicine in India and has furthered her knowledge in meditation techniques, psychotherapy, massage techniques, and various CAM therapies. Since 2000, she has operated her own clinic in Germany and serves as director and lecturer at the Euroved Academy. She is also president of the EUAA and author of "New Age Ayurveda". Dr. Gramminger is dedicated to establishing Ayurveda as a recognized medical science in Europe.

Professor Dr. Stefan Brunnhuber, a renowned German author, psychiatrist, economist, and sociologist, is actively engaged in the field of sustainable development and transformation strategies. His work is characterized by an interdisciplinary approach, combining various disciplines to address complex societal challenges. In addition to his role as the Medical Director of the Diakonie Clinic for Integrative Psychiatry, Dr. Brunnhuber also serves as a distinguished professor of psychology and sustainability at Mittweida University in Germany.

Dr. Brunnhuber, together with Dr. Harsha Gramminger, is currently undertaking a special mission which involves integrating Ayurveda, a traditional Indian healing system, with modern medicine to provide comprehensive treatment to patients at the Diakonie Clinic for Integrative Psychiatry. This endeavor aims to create a harmonious fusion of two distinct healing approaches, Ayurveda and modern medicine, for the betterment of humanity.

Dr. Harsha Gramminger, Director and lecturer at the Euroved Academy, recently embarked on a remarkable mission during her visit to India - the integration of Ayurveda with Modern Medicine. She firmly believes that by combining the time-honored diagnostic methods, holistic therapies, and herbal medications of Ayurveda with the precise diagnostics of Modern Medicine, remarkable advancements can be made in treating various diseases faced by mankind. Dr. Harsha's visit to Dr. Parvatheedevi, the Superintendent of the Government Ayurveda Research Institute for Mental Health and Hygiene in Kottakkal, Malappuram district of Kerala, was driven by this special purpose.

During her time in Kottakkal, Kerala, Dr. Gramminger engaged in a discussion with Dr. Parvatheedevi, the Superintendent of GARIM Kottakkal, alongside AP Jayadevan, who serves as the Coordinating Editor. Let's delve into those enlightening conversations.

JAYADEVAN: How did you reach Ayurveda from Modern medicine?

In 1987, during my second or third visit to India, I found myself in Pune. It was there that a friend approached me with a concerning issue - an inflamed foot with pus oozing out due to an injury. Surprisingly, she was unwilling to take any antibiotics for her condition. I expressed my concern, emphasizing the potential dangers of avoiding antibiotics, especially in a country like India where hygiene standards may not be up to par. However, she remained steadfast in her belief that natural remedies could be found in India. In search of such remedies, we visited an Ayurvedic pharmacy in Pune. The pharmacy owner informed us that Professor Ranade from the Ayurvedic college was present at that time and suggested that I consult with him regarding this matter. I was familiar with Dr. Subhash Ranade, a renowned figure in the field, and he recommended an Ayurvedic medicine called Sukshma Triphala as an alternative to antibiotics. Although skeptical, I relayed this information to my friend. The pharmacist provided the medicine and advised her to take two tablets three times a day until the inflammation subsided, which could take around 10 days. I handed the medicine to my friend, cautioning her that she assumed full responsibility for her decision, as I couldn't guarantee its

effectiveness. Personally, I viewed this course of action as risky. However, she followed the prescribed regimen, and to my amazement, I witnessed her foot gradually healing day by day. All the pus drained out, and within the span of ten days, her foot was completely healed. It was truly astonishing to witness the power of herbal remedies in treating such a severe inflammation without the use of antibiotics.

I came to understand for the first time that Ayurvedic medicine is effective for treating acute conditions. Subsequently, I witnessed numerous miraculous healings achieved through Ayurveda, prompting me to pursue studies in this field under the guidance of Professor Devanathan from J. B. Roy State Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, which was founded on February 10, 1916.

DR. PARVATHEDEVY: Currently, I believe that implementing an integrated approach may not be feasible in Kerala. Nevertheless, I must commend your initiative to establish a psychiatric hospital that adopts such an approach. What inspired you to bridge Ayurvedic Psychiatry with modern psychiatry?

HARSHA: I was thrilled about the opportunity, and all recognition must be given to Dr. Professor Stephan Dr. Brunnhuber, the Medical Director of the Diakonie Clinic for Integrative Psychiatry. He sought my help in establishing an integrated approach at the Clinic. It was truly unexpected to hear this from him. After numerous meetings and thorough discussions about the project, I was appointed as the project manager. My task was to identify the most qualified experts in relevant fields for the project. I began reaching out to different individuals and organizations to locate suitable candidates to collaborate on the integration project.

I was requested to include individuals from Germany in the project, however, I was unwilling to overlook the expertise of professionals from India for the comprehensive project. I had engaged in discussions with the pharmacists and nurses at the hospital regarding the integration, and they were all prepared to participate in this remarkable project. In every department, both the patients and the nurses had the habit of practicing meditation for one hour each day.

I am highly passionate about incorporating

Ayurveda into the integrated project. With over 25 years of experience in Ayurveda, I previously worked in the European Union in Brussels where I engaged with AYUSH authorities in Delhi. Currently, I am playing a pivotal role as a bridge between India and Germany.

The Materia Medica in Europe and India exhibit stark contrasts. Therefore, one must adapt at all levels. I was stationed in Brussels to elucidate this distinction. India's approach to medicine is unique, not inferior or incorrect, but rather equally valuable yet distinct in its own right.

I have been instrumental in organizing the two European World Ayurveda Congresses. In my opinion, this is just the beginning of a long-term project. I anticipate that it will take one or two years to establish a proper foundation, and the project itself has a duration of five years with the possibility of an extension. As this project progresses, other hospitals in Germany will likely take notice and insurance companies may also become interested in participating. I believe that this will mark the start of Ayurveda becoming integrated into Western practices.

Given these reasons, the project holds great significance for us. I am extremely grateful to

Professor Dr. Stefan Brunnhuber for his courage in spearheading this initiative. Despite facing opposition from many allopathic doctors and associations, he remained steadfast and determined. He is a true trailblazer, not only as a psychiatrist but also as a sociologist and sustainable finance expert. He frequently delivers speeches on various stages, shedding light on our finance system.

DR. PARVATHEDEVY: The majority of Antipsychotics are associated with numerous side effects, leading to a decline in the patients' quality of life. However, by consuming Ayurveda medications, which are known to have fewer side effects, their conditions can improve, allowing for a reduction in the dosage of modern medicines and potentially enhancing their quality of life. It is evident that Ayurveda can offer better outcomes in many cases of personality disorders. Consequently, some modern doctors refer patients with personality disorder issues to us. I believe that by adopting an integrated approach, we can anticipate a quicker recovery and an overall improvement in the patients' quality of life.

HARSHA: I believe that our project will have a positive impact on India. We can inform the Indian





population that we have a comprehensive project in Germany, which may also contribute to the integration process there. However, it is important to note that we do not have authorization to import Ayurveda medicines in Germany. Only natural food supplements are allowed. It is quite surprising that in Germany, the birthplace of Homeopathy, herbal medications cannot be used. We have a long list of medicines that we need to procure, but we are uncertain about how to obtain them. Additionally, Ayurvedic medications in Germany and Europe are quite expensive. Before obtaining permission to use them, various tests for heavy metals, bacteria, fungus, etc. must be conducted, which further increases the prices. Consequently, we are only able to sell them in small quantities. Legalizing everything, particularly the import and export of

medicines, is crucial. We will make every effort to accomplish this, but we must proceed with caution. Despite the challenges, we are determined to move forward.

JAYADEVAN: According to you, what are the challenges that Ayurveda faces in Europe?

HARSHA : The main challenge that Ayurveda faces in Europe is gaining acceptance from modern medicine. Ayurveda is not just a medical system, but a comprehensive lifestyle that promotes overall health through practices such as Yoga, Meditation, and a focus on pure food and nourishment. Unlike modern medicine, which tends to focus on diagnosis and therapy for specific body parts, Ayurveda takes a holistic approach, considering the body, mind, and soul as interconnected. This is one of the strengths of Ayurveda. The challenge lies in making Western medicine professionals aware of a system that emphasizes a holistic lifestyle rather than just offering cures. Introducing Ayurvedic principles to modern medicine and helping them understand and accept it can be a starting point. Initially, Ayurveda can be introduced as food supplements rather than medicines, which would facilitate the research process. However, the proper registration of Ayurvedic medicines is necessary to ensure their effective use.

JAYADEVAN: Why don't you think about establishing research labs in India with the assistance of the Indian Government, which could potentially meet the standards required by Europe. Is there a chance that this could become a reality?

HARSHA: Yes, that is the approach we should take. By bringing Western scientists to collaborate with Indian researchers, we can ensure that the research meets the required standards and maintains transparency. Our goal is to facilitate an integrated research process where ideas and expertise are exchanged. I will discuss this possibility with Indian authorities at AYUSH and explore the potential for a proper integration that benefits those seeking natural healing methods. This collaboration could mark the beginning of a remarkable journey, and it would be an honor for Dr. Stefan Brunnhuber, Psychiatry, and the global community. Let us spread this message far and wide, as it would be truly wonderful to see the best minds come together and contribute to a healthier world.