

## HAHNEMANN'S DOSE AND POTENCY

DR. S. C. BHATTACHARYA, B.A., H.M.B., CUTTACK

The danger which threatens our system of medicine lies in the fact that we are being dragged into materialism day by day. But Hahnemann did not belong to the Materialistic School of Medicine. Time is ripe for us as homœopaths to recall again the instructions laid down by him in the Organon. The Organon of medicine is indisputably the basis of the homœopathic healing art and at every repetition of the reading of this remarkable book, new and important knowledge may be gained. His final views in regard to the dose were arrived at gradually after long years of careful experiment and observation. In the last years of his life, he arrived at the conviction of the efficacy of high potencies and followed in the preparation of his remedies and their doses, some methods different from those which he had taught in his former works. Those modifications were introduced in the sixth edition of his Organon. Unfortunately this work never appeared in his life time, as it came to light only in 1922. The various editions of this book, from the first to the sixth, shows how the author slowly and step by step reached infinitesimal dose. So we hope that the homœopathic practitioner should strictly adhere to the latest instructions of the great founder of the homœopathic doctrine. When Hahnemann began to practise homœopathy, he prescribed the usual doses of the time, eg. Ipecac in five grains, Nux Vomica in four grains, Cinchona bark in one to two drams; but when he found that such doses caused violent aggravations, he reduced the quantity day by day and at last into the infinitesimal. In the last years of his life he seemed to devote his attention solely on diminishing the quantity of his medicines. For this he advised his patients to smell the medicine. But smelling of medicines is a method which has long been given up by us. Hahnemann extolled the power of olfaction on sensitive patients. Yet we

find that some homœopaths are using at the present day large doses (even drop doses) and too low potencies, as we were using in the beginning of our practice, from lack of better knowledge and for wrong selection of our remedies. But the medicine used in larger doses unfolds its other symptoms which nullify its similarity and thus establish another dissimilar disease in place of the former. The difference between the old school and the new school of medicine, in reference to drug action, is that the old school thinks of how much they can give without poisoning the patient, while we boast as to how little we can give and effect a cure. It is important to consider here that the want of success is not due to the smallness of the dose, but to the inappropriateness of the remedy. Now the point is that whether we shall travel the same road that Hahnemann and his followers had travelled or we shall proceed in our own way. But we are all amateurs. In the words of Dr. Lilienthal—"only a master, but not the apprentice, dares override fixed rules." A natural law is immutable.

In treating disease homœopathically the object is not to produce symptoms but to remove them. This is possible by a similar remedy in the minimum dose. In order that the suffering of the patient may not be increased, a much smaller dose is given. In a general analysis, the human body is composed of organs, the organs are made of tissues and each tissue is divisible into molecules. We find in each microscopic portion a minute likeness of the whole. The same idea applies to the practice of medicine. Recent investigations in the field of vitamins prove that the lower triturations are inert, but by raising them to higher potencies namely in fluid form, their activity is highly increased. This verifies Hahnemann's dicta on the power of the small dose and the harmful effects of the material doses. The more he became convinced of the dynamic nature of disease, the more he sought the dynamic plane in medicine. The most powerful force in the world of medicine is the potentized remedy. In brief, potentization is a process of

rendering potent, that which was previously impotent. When the author of *Organon* began to dilute his medicines to avoid aggravations, he did not find that their action ceased, but it multiplied, though its nature was considerably altered. At this stage a new world of therapeutic power opened to his view. Thus he was able to penetrate into the deepest recesses of the human body, working thence to less vital parts. The reaction of the quantity of drugs is so minute that it is not possible to tell how small the quantity of the drug in the solution is, yet it still shows definite action on every part of the human body. Notwithstanding the quantity of the drug used, the solution is activated to a marked degree by vigorous stirring or succussion. In order to avoid aggravations resulting from ordinary material doses, he found out a dose so small that it would not endanger life in any way. Moreover, assimilation everywhere is accompanied by potentization. When the grass is eaten and assimilated by the cow, or the rice is digested by man, the process of transformation from the lower to the higher is always essentially a potentization. Still we find that the infinitesimal dose has always been the central point of attack upon homeopathy by its opponents.

It is foolish to reject the new because it is new, as we must have at our hand all the means for sound progress. According to his latest experiences, Hahnemann advised us frequent repetition of doses but in different forms, and departed from the single dose, especially in the treatment of chronic diseases. He is of opinion that the patient may be made sick by receiving unchanged doses, as the vital principle does not accept such doses without resistance, because the medicine no longer finds the same condition of the vital force as before the last dose for the rapid accomplishment of cure of chronic diseases the medicine should be selected with utmost care and the potentized remedy, dissolved in water, should be given in proper small doses in definite intervals (*Organon*, Sec. 246.). If the chosen

medicine is given in proper small but gradually higher doses, each some what modified with renewed dynamization (Sec. 247), no such apparent increase of the original disease ought to appear during the treatment of chronic diseases. If the first dose should bring forth an aggravation it would be a sure sign that the dose is altogether too large (Sec. 282). The medicine, dissolved in eight to forty tablespoonfuls of water, may be given daily and for months, if necessary. In sensitive patients a teaspoonful of this solution may be put in a second glass of water containing about seven to eight spoonfuls, and this thoroughly stirred may be given to the patient. In such patients a third or fourth glass may be necessary. Each glass should be made fresh daily. It is rarely necessary to use more than one globule; it should be crushed in a few grains of sugar of milk and dissolved in the requisite quantity of water. We can begin with the lowest potency and gradually rise higher. If there is any aggravation we can repeat it at longer intervals.

It may be observed, here, that under homœopathic principles any potency may be required in any case. If the physician confines himself to one or two potencies, he will deprive his patient of some valuable means of cure. The whole scale of potencies must be open to the prescribed and a series of potencies may be required by every practitioner, we are required to measure the amount of force of the morbid cause. Potentization according to scale gives the unit of measurement. Hence all potencies are required for the cure of disease. At one stage the patient may need a low potency and at another a high potency. The nature and progress of disease will determine how often the dose is to be repeated. The most difficult thing is to learn to wait. The whole matter of dosage is a question of individualization. "That dose is appropriate which will be proportionate to the degree of susceptibility of the patient" (Fincke). The relationship of drugs to disease rests on susceptibility.

Homœopathy is based upon natural laws. Action And Reaction Are Equal And Opposite: this law guides us in the application of drugs. It is fixed and unchangeable. So the homœopathic dose is always different from the physiological or pathogenetic dose. The curative dose must be similar in quantity and quality to the dose of the morbid agent.

The last letter of Hahnemann, written on April, 24, 1843, to Boenninghausen, and signed by himself with a trembling hand, at his request, contained two of his latest cures—the first of these cases was an acute ailment of the brain and the other a chronic complicated disease. In these two cases the new dynamization was used as described in the sixth edition of the *Organon*. (Sec. 269-272.) It is a matter of regret that this method has not yet been adopted in our pharmacies in India and abroad.

"In the homœopathic employment of medicines, where the totality of morbid symptoms has a great similarity to the action of a drug, it is really criminal not to give quite small doses, indeed as small as possible. In such cases doses of the size prescribed in the routine practice become real poisons and murderous agents." (Pierce).

But there is one notable exception to this law of dosage. In the treatment of the chronic miasms, psora, syphilis and sycosis, still visible on the skin (Itch, chancre and figwarts), he advises us to commence treatment with larger doses, several times daily, if necessary, and to gradually ascend to higher degrees of dynamization. In the treatment of figwarts a local application is considered necessary with the internal use of the remedy. (*Organon*, Footnote No. 163.)

Such observations of the author of homœopathy as to the size of the dose, made at the conclusion of his earthly career, has at least for us a great importance. Every homœopath desirous of furthering the progress of our science should strictly and scrupulously adhere to the instruction of the great founder of the homœopathic doctrine. The field here is vast and there is room for much investiga-

tion, and the results of such investigation will enrich the health of mankind. The possibilities of homœopathy are infinite. The better knowledge we have of our art, the better use we can make of it. In the words of Dr. Kent "while homœopathy itself is a perfect science its truth is only partially known. The truth itself relates to the divine, the knowledge relates to man."

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### THE PRESENT-DAY NEED FOR HOMŒOPATHY

DR. ALVA BENJAMIN, M.B., CH.M., F.F.HOM.

When studying the history of medicine one is impressed by the fact that through the ages the trends of treatment have shown a striking parallelism with the spirit of the times in which patients were treated; and the same is to be seen even today.

In ancient times medicine was very much bound up with mythology and superstition. Through the ages it went through an evolution, just as other human activities have done. When we come to mediæval times, we find men fired with the spirit of exploration and experiment, no longer content to have their thoughts and actions based merely on the authority of their ancestors. It was during these years that medicine began to develop a scientific foundation. It was then that Europe discovered America, printing was introduced from China, and William Harvey demonstrated beyond doubt the circulation of the blood. This experiment of his was, perhaps, the beginning of the mechanical interpretation of vital phenomena and the first step taken away from the wider philosophical outlook on medical treatment. It has since then become more and more scientific, based on work in laboratories of many kinds, until at the present day it has almost lost sight of the individual as such, and treats the human body much as a mechanic would handle a broken-down motor car.