

HAHNEMANN'S "NEW & IMPROVED METHOD" OF REPETITION, "ORGANON 6th EDITION

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The sixth edition of the *Organon* has an interesting but rather colorful history. The last or fifth edition, published in 1833, was long out of print when Hahnemann, then in Paris, wrote a letter dated February 20, 1842, to Schaub, his publisher in Düsseldorf, saying that "I have now after eighteen months of work, finished the sixth edition of my '*Organon*,' the most nearly perfect of all." After stating his preference as to type and paper, he asked Schaub if he would publish it. But Hahnemann died on July second of the following year without having completed his negotiations. Owing to various circumstances, but especially to the mercenary tactics of Madame Melanie Hahnemann, the work was not published until 1921, and Dr. William Boericke's translation of it into English in 1935.

Twice during this long period, the precious manuscript was nearly lost. At the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, Melanie hurriedly packed her husband's manuscripts into chests, and with other personal effects, fled to Darup on the Dutch frontier. Again, shortly after the revolutionary disturbances in the Ruhr in 1920, Dr. Richard Haehl of Stuttgart, with financial assistance from Dr. Boericke, was able to obtain the manuscript of the 6th edition from Melanie's heirs and smuggle it safely through the occupied territory. It was published under his supervision during the following year.

Melanie d'Hervilly-Gohier Hahnemann was a beautiful and very clever Frenchwoman who moved among the elite of the gay life of Paris. But she was a schemer and according to one observer, "an energetically acquisitive business woman." It was rumored that her husband had bequeathed to her a considerable fortune, and that a portion of it was to go to his heirs in Germany; but his children saw little of it. She made many promises to them which she

never kept, despite the fact that some of them were actually in want. Many attempts were made to persuade her to relinquish Hahnemann's manuscripts for publication, but without results.

During a visit by Madame Hahnemann at his home, in July 1856, Boenninghausen obtained from her a definite promise to publish the sixth edition of the *Organon* in the autumn of that year, and to send him her husband's case records so that he and his associates could experiment with the "new and improved method" for the repetition of the dose. Taking her at her word, Boenninghausen announced the good news at the 9th Assembly of the Homœopathic Physicians of Rhineland and Westphalia. This was unfortunate, for Madame Hahnemann immediately wrote him a caustic letter taking him to task for "betraying what should have remained secret," and closing with the statement that, "if, dear friend, you had asked me, I should have begged you to remain silent until I gave you another message. Hahnemann's works must appear before mankind like the sun, which is not controlled but enjoyed."

However, when it was announced on April 3, 1865 that Reichert and Zander were about to publish the sixth edition under the editorship of Dr. Süss-Haneman, a grandson of the author, Melanie wrote to the printers saying that she alone possessed the original manuscript, and that no doubt they were well aware of the stringent laws in Germany protecting the copyright of literary works. Later in the year, she tried to get the same publishers to print the book, but negotiations, for some reason, fell through.

The faculty of the Hahnemann Medical College of Philadelphia, headed by Constantin Hering, tried for some time to obtain the manuscript of the sixth edition, but gave up because Melanie's terms were so exorbitant that they decided to wait for a more favorable opportunity.

Later Madame Hahnemann entered into negotiations with Dr. Carrol Dunham of New York, who first suggested

that the printing of the work should be paid for by subscriptions. But he died before any agreement could be reached.

In 1877, Dr. Bayes of London made enquiries in behalf of the London School of Homœopathy with especial reference to the manuscript of the sixth edition, but also asked for case records and other manuscripts left by Hahnemann. The widow refused his request on the grounds that the original drafts of her husband's works were too bulky to be shipped, "and moreover, the English physician would be unable to read Hahnemann's fine, German hand-writing." From letters by T. P. Wilson and Dr. Campbell, published in the *Cincinnati Medical Advance*, we know that Madame Hahnemann had originally intended that her husband's posthumous writings should go to the homœopaths in America, but that she demanded \$50,000 for them.

Melanie died on May 27th, 1878, almost forgotten. But her heirs proved to be reasonable, and Dr. Boericke obtained from them the original manuscript of this most important work in all homœopathic literature.

Hahnemann made many changes and some additions in his revision of the fifth edition of his *Organon*, the most important of which is what he terms his "new and improved method" for the repetition of the dose, given in paragraphs 248 and 273. Other changes and additions, for the most part, merely amplify his former teachings. He added a long footnote to paragraph 11, in which he discusses the question:

What is the dynamic influence—dynamic power? Our earth, by virtue of an invisible energy, carries the moon around her in twenty-eight days and several hours, and the moon alternately, in definite fixed hours, . . . raises our northern seas to flood tide and again correspondingly lowers them to ebb. Apparently not through material agencies, not through mechanical contrivances . . . and so we see numerous other events about us as results of the action of one substance on

another substance without being able to recognize a sensible connection between cause and effect. Only the cultured, practiced in comparison and deduction, can form for himself a kind of supra-sensual idea sufficient to keep all that is material and mechanical in his thoughts from such concepts.

He calls such effects "dynamic, virtual" (by which he means energizing, potential), "or such as result from absolute, specific, pure energy and action of the one substance upon the other substance." He points to the dynamic, sick-making influence of medicines upon healthy man, and their power to act upon the principle of life and restore him to health, and says that they are nothing but "infection and so in no way material or mechanical." He further illustrates his thesis by the magnet, which attracts to itself and magnetizes steel needles by a means purely immaterial, just as a child with small-pox or measles infects a healthy child by a purely specific, "conceptual" influence, dynamically. "Substances used as medicines, are medicines only in so far as they possess each its own specific energy to alter the well-being of man through dynamic influence, by means of the living sensory fiber," just as the nearness of a magnet can communicate only magnetic energy to steel by a kind of infection, but not other properties, such as hardness, ductility, etc. Far more energy, he says, is exhibited by the smallest dose containing so little of material substance that it is beyond conception, than by large doses of the crude medicinal substance; and he repeats the statements, made elsewhere in his writings, that it is not in the corporeal atoms of highly dynamized medicines or their physical or mathematical surfaces that the medicinal energy is found, but an unveiled, liberated, specific medicinal force in the moistened globule or in its solution that acts dynamically by contact with the living animal fiber and thus through the whole organism, "the more strongly, the more free and more immaterial the energy has become, through the dynamization."

Among other changes, paragraphs 52 to 56 have been entirely re-written, enlarging upon the two methods of treating disease, the homœopathic or curative, and the allopathic or antipathic which, in effect, is only palliative. Long footnotes are added to paragraphs 60 to 74.

Paragraph 148 is practically new, concerning itself chiefly with the origin of disease and denying the prevalent opinion that a "materia peccans" is the basic etiological factor.

Of far greater interest to us as homœopathic practitioners are the contents of paragraphs 246 to 248, setting forth his "new and improved method" of repeating the dose. Here he seems to have discarded entirely his previous and most emphatic instructions concerning the single dose. Paragraph 246, as written in the fifth edition, reads as follows:

On the other hand, the slowly progressive amelioration consequent on a very minute dose, whose selection has been accurately homœopathic, when it has met with no hindrance to the duration of its action, sometimes accomplishes all the good the remedy in question is capable from its nature of performing in a given case, in periods of forty, fifty or a hundred days. This is, however, but rarely the case; and besides it must be a matter of great importance to the physician as well as to the patient that, were it possible, this period should be diminished to one half, one quarter and still less, so that a much more rapid cure can be obtained. And this may be very happily effected, as recent and oft-repeated observations have shown, under three conditions: firstly, if the medicine selected with the utmost care was perfectly homœopathic; secondly, if it is given in the minutest dose, so as to produce the least possible excitation of the vital force, and yet sufficient to effect the necessary change in it; and thirdly, if this minutest yet powerful dose of the best selected medicine be repeated at suitable intervals, which experience shall

have pronounced to be the best adapted for accelerating the cure to the utmost extent and the vital force be not excited to adverse reaction.

Beginning with the second condition, the revised paragraph reads:

... if it is highly potentized, dissolved in water and given in proper small dose that experience has taught as the most suitable in definite intervals for the quickest accomplishment of the cure, but with the precaution *that the degree of every dose deviate somewhat from the preceding and following* in order that the vital principle which is to be altered to a similar medicinal disease be not aroused to untoward reactions and revolt, as is always the case with unmodified and especially rapidly repeated doses.

In paragraphs 247 and 248, Hahnemann still further elucidates his new idea. He says:

It is impractical to repeat the same dose of a remedy once, not to mention its frequent repetition (and at shorter intervals in order not to delay the cure). The vital principle does not accept such unchanged doses without resistance, that is, without other symptoms of the medicine to manifest themselves, than those of the disease to be cured, because the former dose has already accomplished the expected change in the vital principle and a second, wholly similar, unchanged dose of the same medicine no longer finds, therefore, the same conditions of the vital force. The patient may indeed be made sicker in another way. . . . But if each succeeding dose is changed slightly every time, namely potentized higher (par. 269-270), then the vital principle may be altered without difficulty by the same medicine and thus the cure be brought nearer.

For this purpose (par. 248), we potentize anew the medicinal solution, with perhaps 8, 10, 12 succussions, from which we give the patient one, or increasingly

several teaspoonful doses, in long lasting diseases, daily or every second day, in acute diseases every two to six hours and in very urgent cases every hour or oftener. Thus in chronic diseases, every correctly chosen homœopathic medicine, even those whose action is of long duration, may be repeated daily for months with ever increasing success. . . . On the other hand, should there appear during almost daily repetition of the well-indicated homœopathic remedy towards the end of the treatment of a chronic disease, so-called *homœopathic aggravation*, by which the balance of the morbid symptoms seem to again increase somewhat, . . . the medicinal disease similar to the original one now alone persists, the dose in that case must be reduced still further and repeated at longer intervals and, possibly, stopped several days in order to see if the convalescence need no further medicinal aid. The appearance of symptoms caused by the excess of the homœopathic medicine will soon disappear.

The long footnote to paragraph 246 in the previous edition is replaced by a shorter one giving Hahnemann's reasons for making the changes above enumerated. He says:

What I said in the fifth edition of the *Organon*, in order to prevent these undesirable reactions of the vital energy, was all that the experience I then had justified. But during the last four or five years, however, all these difficulties are wholly solved by my new and altered but perfected method. The same carefully selected medicine may now be given daily and for months, *if necessary*, in this way, namely after the lower degree of potency has been used for one or two weeks in the treatment of chronic diseases, advance is made in the same way to higher degrees.

Naturally, the announcement of this apparent right-about-face on the part of Hahnemann was received differently by the various groups of our School. Those who

avored the lower dilutions and had been accustomed to repeat them ad lib., seized upon it as a final and complete vindication of their position. They were elated, for now they could say to their "high potency" confreres, as one of them did, in his review of Boericke's sixth edition, "There is a poser for you!" Some of them may have taken exception to Hahnemann's claim that the potency of a remedy can be raised by simple succussion, as they did when Richard Hughes, in 1878, made the statement that Jenichen's high potencies "are now known to be simply succussions of an ordinary attenuation without further dilution," which was not true. No doubt the majority of homœopaths were unaware that any changes had been made, for they did not read the *Organon*. Those who held to the single dose were divided, some endeavoring to excuse Hahnemann on the grounds that he was 86 when he completed his revision of the fifth edition and had, quite naturally, lost some of his former acumen and good judgment. Others were willing to concede that perhaps there was some merit in his new method. Thus far I have been unable to find, in our current literature, any worthwhile discussion of this subject, or any account of Hahnemann's new ideas having been tested in actual practice. It is indeed unfortunate that Boenninghausen and his associates were deprived of the opportunity of doing so.

Hahnemann's self-appointed critics fail to realize that he had opened an entirely new field of therapeutics. While he may have gleaned a hint here and there, for framing his theories, from the writings of his contemporaries and his predecessors, he was obliged to work out the practical application of similia unaided and alone. He was a keen observer, an indefatigable worker, and never announced a conclusion until he had confirmed it by long and painstaking research and experimentation. This is proved by the fact that his *Essay on a New Principle for the Ascertaining the Curative Power of Drugs* was not written until six years after his first proving of *Cinchona*,

the first edition of the *Organon* was not published until 1810 and the *Chronic Diseases* not until 1828. In view of all this, it would be presumptuous on our part to question the validity of his reasons for revising his method of repetition, or thrust aside his apparent abandonment of previous teachings in the later years of his life, as vagaries of a vacillating or senile mind. It can be proved by the testimony of several competent witnesses, notably of Dr. Crosario, Hahnemann's intimate friend, and of Melanie, Hahnemann's wife, that the "Master" retained his clear thinking and sound judgement to the last day of his life. In plain words, he knew what he was about when he revised the fifth edition of the *Organon*.

What then is a just and equitable appraisal of Hahnemann's new method? In the first place, Hahnemann's critics overlook the fact he used almost exclusively the lower potencies which, as a rule, must be repeated frequently in order to produce a favourable reaction. If, therefore, he found that he could shorten the course of a chronic disease without undue aggravation by repeating his remedies in gradually ascending potencies, we cannot doubt that he was able to do so. Witness the unique modes of repetition introduced by Bach and Dishington, which are nothing more than an abbreviation of Hahnemann's "new and improved method." In fact Dishington asserts that Bach's authority for "plussing," as he calls it, is to be found in paragraphs 246 to 281 of the sixth edition of the *Organon*. Bach's procedure differed from that of Hahnemann in that he used actual handmade potencies and only one each of the 30th, the 31st and 32nd. According to Gordon, it does not work well in the higher potencies, but that Dishington's "double dosage" (following a 10,000th in a few hours by, say, a 45,000th) yields excellent results in any potency above the 200th. Hahnemann's contention that the potency of a medicine can be raised by succussion alone might be open to debate; but here again the matter of his experience presents itself. Even in the early years of his prac-

tice, he claimed that it did, going so far in one place as to say that a pocket case should not be roughly handled, as jolting might raise the potencies of the medicines it contained. Could we deny this without making careful tests?

Lastly, Hahnemann did not discard his teaching regarding the efficacy of the single dose or his frequent and positive warnings against the giving of too much medicine. For he says in paragraph 246 of the sixth edition:

Every perceptibly and strikingly increasing amelioration during treatment is a condition which, as long as it lasts, completely precludes every repetition of the administration of any medicine whatsoever, because all the good the medicine taken continues to effect is now hastening towards completion. This is not infrequently the case in acute disease, but in more chronic diseases, on the other hand, a single dose of an appropriately selected homœopathic remedy will, at times, complete even with but slowly progressive improvement and give the help which such a remedy in such a case can accomplish gradually within forty, fifty, sixty, 100 days. This is, however, but rarely the case.

And in paragraph 248:

On the other hand, should there appear during almost daily repetition of the well indicated homœopathic remedy, towards the end of the treatment of a chronic disease, so-called *homœopathic aggravations* by which the balance of the morbid symptoms seem to again increase somewhat (the medicinal disease, similar to the original, now alone persistently manifests itself); the doses in that case must then be reduced still further and repeated in longer intervals and possibly stopped several days, in order to see if the convalescence needs further aid.

Thus it appears that his new method was to be used only in chronic cases, but not in all as proved by the phrase I have italicized in my quotation of the footnote to

paragraph 246—if necessary. Hahnemann is therefore still aware that the single dose, under favorable circumstances, is quite sufficient, and that repetition of the dose when an aggravation of the original symptoms occurs is harmful and delays the cure. Had he been able to divest himself of the prejudice he held against Kafka and Jenichen because they were laymen, and followed the example of Boeninghausen, Hering or William Wesselhoeft, who demonstrated the efficacy of the high potencies, I have no doubt but that he would have added another paragraph to the sixth edition of his monumental treatise on the art of prescribing according to the law of similia. But is this a bit of wishful thinking? The question still remains: Does Hahnemann's new method restore the patient to health in a shorter time than does the use of high potencies in single doses? The answer will not be known until some zealous group of research workers makes a careful test of it.

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THE SAURASHTRA HOMŒOPATHIC MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION, RAJKOT

EXTRACT FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT
OF 18. 2. 56.

1. This Association came into existence on 24th November 1953.
2. In the Constitution of India, when the Sovereign Democratic Republic was promulgated, Equality of status and of opportunity was secured to all the citizens of India. It is expected that every system of medicine will be given equal status and rights and every citizen will be given a free choice of medicine for maintaining public health.
3. During the British Rule, the Allopaths were given every opportunity and Homœopathy and Ayurved were