

INTRODUCTION TO BACH FLOWER REMEDIES

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Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of Homoeopathy, tells us that "the state of disposition of the patient—popularly known as mind symptoms—often chiefly determines the selection of the remedy" and that "we shall never be able to cure if we do not select a remedy covering, along with the patient's other symptoms, those relating to the changes in his state of the mind and disposition." He further observes that "mental symptom is decidedly a characteristic symptom." (sections 211 and 213 of the *Organon*).

This is so because cure has to take place from above downwards.

The system of flower remedies founded by Dr. Edward Bach, a qualified physician of London, fulfils this requirement of Hahnemann, since, in this system also remedies are prescribed on mental symptoms only and no physical symptom can be found in the materia medica of flower remedies.

There are many homoeopathic practitioners at home and abroad who are using these flower remedies and the following sketch is provided to the readers who would like to know about the system.

DISCOVERY

Dr. Edward Bach studied medicine at University College Hospital, London and got his M.B.B.S., M.R.C.S., and L.R.C.P. etc. He then became Casualty Medical officer in that college and thereafter he was bacteriologist in Harley Street, the hollywood of physicians in the world. Dr. Bach also studied Homoeopathy and obtained his diploma. As every homoeopathic physician knows, the search of the remedy, the *similimum* in Homoeopathy is sometimes a laborious process and if the practitioner does not find the *similimum*, he is helpless. Even if he hits at the remedy, he is again confronted with the problem of potency and its repetition. Dr. Bach was not satisfied with the elaborate and sometimes intricate methods of repertorisation in Homoeopathy and thought that if it be true that God loves us so much, then why should He make us suffer from disease? "As Nature works constantly towards perfection, she should have some remedial means in Her kingdom which should be simple and at the same time very effective but without side effects. The patient should be able to prescribe such remedies for himself without elaborate medical knowledge, as he takes water for thirst and food when hungry." These thoughts induced Dr. Bach to do research. After six years of hard work with untiring zeal he found, perfected and put into use in the year 1930 a system of medicine as simple as it has proved effective.

1. *Beginner's Guide To Bach Flower Remedies*, published by Dr. V. Krishnamoorty, 7 Srinivasamurthy Avenue, Madras.

In this system there are only thirty-eight remedies which are very easy to select and no potency problem.¹

HOW THE REMEDIES ARE PRESCRIBED

The homoeopaths know very well the value of mind symptoms and one strong mental can overrule many physical symptoms. In the healing system by flower remedies discovered by Dr. Bach, the medicine is selected for the man, the individual, that is, his feelings only are considered. By this, the reader need not at once rush to the conclusion that the remedies described in the following pages are for mental cases only. This point is "the mood and disposition is always altered in every corporeal disease" and it is the altered disposition of the sick that has to be considered by correcting which all bodily troubles will also disappear. Therefore, whatever be the physical suffering, flower remedies are not prescribed for that, but to cure every physical malady only the mind of the patient is considered for selecting the remedy. *If this is not understood first, the newcomer will be apt to wrongly conclude that these remedies are for mental cases only, particularly when he reads the materia medica and its repertory.*

For example, a person of 35, complained that he had the delusion as if a rope was thrown around his neck and with the other end he was pulled away. This involuntary thought occurred to him repeatedly, several times daily. Naturally whenever it occurred he was afraid of it. Now, the two things in this case are (i) fear of known thing (pulled by a rope) and (ii) this unwanted thought circled round and round interfering with his routine activities. For 'fear of known thing' there is only one remedy, viz. *Mimulus*; for repetition of the same unwanted and disagreeable thought the remedy is *White chestnut*.

The two remedies were mixed and given in two dram pills with instructions to take 6 pills at a time, three times a day. The patient was seen after three months and on inquiry he said that after one month's course the thought occurred once or twice a month only, and also he was not afraid of it. After telling this he removed his shirt and showing his body told: "Doctor, I was having ringworm all over my body for the last fifteen years, but after your bottle it has disappeared. Did you give medicine for ringworm also?"

From the above case it will be clear that medicine is prescribed on the symptoms of mind only. By mind symptom the reader need not think of mental derangements, but only the altered disposition.

PREPARATION OF THE REMEDIES, ITS DOSAGE AND REPETITION

The flower available in natural habitat are collected and floated on water which is exposed to sun for a few hours. Then, the blossoms are lifted carefully and the water poured into bottles so as to half-fill them. The bottles are then filled up with brandy. One drop of this mixed with one drachm of rectified spirit is for physician's use which is available in India.

In chronic cases up to three or four medicines can be mixed according

to symptoms. For this four drops from each of the four remedies are poured into one dram phial and then filled with globules No. 20 or 30 and the patient asked to take 4 to 6 pills for a dose, three to four times a day.

In acute cases, such as high fever, fainting etc. the dose can be given as often as necessary, and even every fifteen minutes.

BRIEF NOTES ON SOME REMEDIES

Mimulus: There are two remedies for fears. One is for known fear—*Mimulus* and the other is *Aspen* for unknown and vague fears. Fear of darkness, thief, animals, etc. all can be removed with *Mimulus*. The patient expresses fear of death (as in *Ars.*, *Acon.*). But for extreme fear, i.e. terror, the remedy is *Rock Rose*. *Rock Rose* is for sudden and extreme fear, panic, nightmares, terror of bombing, floods, air-raids etc.

Walnut: This is an interesting remedy: but people will laugh at you if you say there is a remedy to help one overcome the difficulties encountered by changes—change of place (sleeplessness in a new house), change of profession. 'Link breaker' would be a better term to describe the usefulness of the remedy. When a change of office (due to transfer, promotion or new job) takes place he is unable to cope with the new people and surroundings. He would prefer the old job to which he is already accustomed. He cannot cut that link and adapt him to the new atmosphere.

The newly married young woman starts to live with her in-laws. Though they treat her nicely, she feels something different. She is unable to come away from the old surroundings and people. *Walnut* will help her to adjust herself to the changed atmosphere.

The use of the remedy can be extended to the following conditions: Change of life—puberty, menopause, teething trouble of children. The system is unable to cope with the changes taking place in the growing body. All troubles of teething children, girls approaching puberty and those troubles that are incidental to menopause can be taken care of by *Walnut* which can be prescribed in a routine way along with other indicated remedies.

Wants to cut his cigarettes and liquor; but is unable to do so; he has formed a habit of it and he is unable to be without it. The hand automatically goes to the cigarette packet. *Walnut* will help to give up all bad habits. Here we should distinguish it from another remedy *Cherry plum*. In the latter, it is not the habit but only the temptation. He knows that liquor is not agreeable to him as doctor has warned him to give it up. He is not taking it. But when he sees the stuff in somebody's house he is unable to resist the temptation. *Cherry plum* will help him to overcome the temptation.

Crab apple: In the text-book this is known as 'cleanser' and is recommended for skin diseases where the patient feels he is unclean in his skin or blood. But that does not convey the full significance of the remedy. One doctor not well-versed in flower remedies told me: "People say *Crab apple* is a cleanser and it is good for skin diseases. I gave it to a skin patient but it

did not help him." By this that doctor might perhaps have concluded that flower remedies are not effective as homoeopathic remedies. At the beginning we have seen how a case of ringworm in a patient was cured. Were those two remedies prescribed for ringworm? No, both the remedies were given on mind symptoms. Let us now see the mental picture of Crab apple. This is useful in skin diseases or any diseases for that matter provided the patient feels and expresses that something is wrong in his blood. "Will it become septic?" He should be sensitive about the uncleanliness. He wants to get rid of it because he feels it may infect others. "Some poison has entered my body or blood."

Supposing in a skin patient where he is not particular about it then Crab apple cannot cure him but some other remedy indicated by his mind symptoms.

Remedies for weakness: For this we have Hornbeam, Olive and Centaury. In Hornbeam he feels he has no strength to accomplish things, hence he is not making an attempt at all, but once he starts the work everything goes on well and he accomplishes the work. In Hornbeam the patient feels that some parts of body or mind is to be strengthened, hence asks for tonics. (In Pulsatilla there is desire for tonics).

The Centaury patient is known by his mind; he is unable to refuse the demands of others and by doing works for others he becomes weak.

Holly: Holly is for jealousy. A married man was having illicit relations with another married lady for many years. When his wife came to know of this, she became furious (due to jealousy) and wrote to her father detailing this. When her father arrived, the man was afraid of him and so he stayed away from the house to avoid his father-in-law. He was given Mimulus for fear after which he became brave and went and faced his father-in-law as if he has not committed anything. When he talked boldly to his father-in-law the latter began to doubt the report of his daughter and so he packed and went back. After this, Holly was given to her in water which removed her jealousy.

Thereafter, Holly, Cherry plum and White chestnut were given to her husband and he discontinued his illicit relations with the other lady. Holly for sexual mania, Cherry plum as he was unable to resist his having relations with the other lady though he knew it was bad and White chestnut as the thoughts of the lady were circling round and round in his mind.
