

## HAHNEMANN AS RESEARCHER AND EXPERIMENTER IN MEDICINE

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I am not going to say anything that you do not know. I am only attempting to string together some aspects which are relevant to the subject of my talk today.

No other physician of his period left documentary evidence of his medical practice as Samuel HAHNEMANN has done. These documents, i.e. Clinical Records of cases, indeed of every case, are available even today. These are contained in 54 large Registers in the Institute for History of Medicine in the Robert Bosch Foundation, Stuttgart. Following the Master, von BOENNINGHAUSEN also left for posterity records of his cases. HAHNEMANN's records cover the period 1801 to 1843. He kept records of cases from the time he began to prescribe medicines on the Law of Similars. Out of about 64 years of his practice as a physician records are available for 43 years, without break.

HAHNEMANN was meticulous in maintaining records. Symptoms produced, symptoms cured, relationship of remedies etc., were all duly marked in the margins.

During his pre-homoeopathic period too he was continuously doing original researches and published them. Some of these publications are:

i) On Arsenic poisoning, its remedies and its medico-legal investigation, Leipzig, 1786. This was considered as a book of importance in Forensic Medicine in that period.

ii) Essay on the prejudices against coal-fires, on the modes of improving this combustible, and on its employment in heating bakers' ovens, Dresden, 1787.

iii) On the influence of some kinds of gases on the fermentation of wine, 1788.

iv) On the tests for iron and lead in wine, 1788.

v) On an uncommonly powerful means for checking putrefaction, 1788.

vi) Exact mode of preparing soluble Mercury, 1788, 1789.

All these are examples of HAHNEMANN's researches in Chemistry.

Next comes the famous Cinchona experiment in 1790 and the experiments made further on. In "the year 1790 I made the first trial with Cinchona bark upon myself" says HAHNEMANN.

Between 1790 and 1796 HAHNEMANN was busy experimenting many medicines on himself and members of his family. "I made it a serious occupation for myself to prove several drugs on the healthy human body... The only way to heal had not been entered upon. It was my lot to proceed along it with my own strength and my own means of help. I proceeded..." All the results were compiled and published in 1805 in the "Fragmenta de Viribus Medicamentorum Positivis..." in two volumes.

It was with extreme caution that he proceeded so that his provers were not in any way injured. It is a very great tribute to this genius, that no prover has, to this day, suffered any irreparable injury as a result of the provings. How many even in these modern days would venture so?

In 1792 he carried out his clinical research in the mentally ill by observing and treating the Prince Klockenbring. HAHNEMANN gives a detailed account of this in an Essay in 1796. As a result of his research in this field he declared that insanity is a disease like any other physical disease and not due to evil spirits etc., and that insanity is curable by medicines.

That HAHNEMANN carried on his experiments and researches-clinical as well as literary-during the period 1790's is well authenticated by his "Essay on a new principle for understanding the curative power of drugs" (1796). It is a masterly essay and any one who reads it will not fail to be struck by the depth of study and experiments.

In 1797 HAHNEMANN reports a "Case of rapidly cured Colicodynia" in which he has said that he had "already previously tried all sorts of powerful so-called antispasmodic remedies...without any result, even without any palliative effect...I determined to give him a medicine which produced very similar morbid symptoms...I gave him four powders each containing four grains and requested him to take one powder daily..." The end result was that the ailment was cured. Please note the dose--4 grains of *Veratrum*.

Did HAHNEMANN rest at that? We see him next in his handling of a Scarlet Fever epidemic in 1799 while he was in Königslutter. Here he speaks of not only curing Scarlet Fever but *preventing* it; he speaks of "preventives" in epidemics. Speaking of the excellent result he obtained with *Belladonna*, a single dose of 1/432,000 part of a grain of the medicine at the commencement of

the fever; and he reflected that "a medicine that is capable of quickly checking a disease in its onset, must be its best preventive". So began the first homoeopathic immunisation in an epidemic. Note that HAHNEMANN had already come from grain doses to 1/432,000 part of a grain! Evidently during the two years 1797-1799 he has been reducing the drug dose and experimenting at every stage.

How scientifically exacting are the norms he laid for claims of curative and preventive medicines may be ascertained from his writing about Hydrophobia: "...there cannot be any *prophylactic* of hydrophobia, that does not prove itself to be at the same time a really efficacious *remedy for the fully developed hydrophobia*. Let a remedy be discovered that has already cured ten persons, really affected with hydrophobia without exception and permanently; this will, this must be, likewise the best prophylactic". HAHNEMANN wrote this in 1803. 190 years after we have not even begun the search in this regard. Shouldn't we begin now when we celebrate the two hundredth birthday of Homoeopathy?

By his experiments upto this period HAHNEMANN established a totally hitherto unthought of scientific criteriae. These are that:

i) The curative effects of diluted and succussed medicinal agent is very efficacious, in very small doses indeed, in the cure of sick lives. Also there can be no limit to such dilution-and- succussion.

ii) Substances like Salt which have no pharmacological value in their gross form become invaluable medicines by this method of preparation of the homoeopathic medicines.

iii) These potentised medicines have effect not only on the sick people but invoke symptoms in healthy people sensitive to the specific medicines.

All the earlier 'scientific beliefs' were shattered with these results of practical experiments by HAHNEMANN.

In 1813 after the war near Leipzig a Typhus epidemic broke out. HAHNEMANN used *Bryonia* and *Rhus toxicodendron* in the 12th centesimal potency as demanded by the symptoms.

However, in 1815, he cured a washerwoman of her abdominal ailment with a single drop of the tincture of *Bryonia*.

Again in 1815 HAHNEMANN treated and cured a 42 year old man with *Pulsatilla* 12th potency a single dose (Quadrillionth). Evidently the dosages,--strong tincture or diluted and potentised--depended upon the nature of sickness.

Interestingly the records indicate that the *Bryonia* patient (washerwoman) was of an angry, irritable nature, while the *Pulsatilla* male was of a mild, soft, yielding

nature. Clearly, HAHNEMANN took the 'mental' symptoms into consideration (paragraph 211 of the *Organon*) while choosing the remedy.

In the meanwhile HAHNEMANN had been working on the theory of Chronic Miasms.

A comparative study of circulatory disorders treated by HAHNEMANN prior to the formulation of his "Chronic Miasms" theory and after it shows a big difference in the medicines used by him in the circulatory diseases. Whereas in the earlier period the most often used remedies were *Nux vomica*, *Chamomilla*, *Pulsatilla*, *Ignatia*, *Stramonium* and *Arsenicum* (in that order) in the later period it was *Sulphur*, *Hepar*, *Rhus toxicodendron*, *Alumina*, *Calcarea*, etc., (in that order). All the time while treating sick persons he was carrying on his experiments also.

In 1826, after his Psora theory was placed before the world HAHNEMANN treated the daughter of his good friend and best student Ernst STAPF, of scrophulous glandular inflammation in the neck, of tuberculous nature. HAHNEMANN considered her ailment as Psoric and treated her so. He gave her a dose of *Calcarea* and directed STAPF to give a dose of *Lycopodium* 12 after 36 days.

HAHNEMANN gave the medicine more often moistened with a few drops of water; sometimes the powder was given dry on the tongue; and noted the results.

Now comes another important development by HAHNEMANN, for very sensitive persons who will get a severe homoeopathic aggravation from taking the medicine through the oral route. For such sensitive persons he recommended the smelling of the medicine--one small medicated globule to be put in a glass phial and the patient told to smell that medicine. In the Foot Note to paragraph 283 of the Fourth Edition of *Organon* (1829) HAHNEMANN gives this direction.

Clearly HAHNEMANN was still experimenting with the dosage and had not yet come to any 'fixed' and 'final' stage.

The Cholera epidemic came to Europe in 1831. HAHNEMANN's prescriptions are well known and the fact that these prescriptions saved many is also well-known. In such epidemics, HAHNEMANN wrote, the medicines must be:

1. Simple
2. easy to have
3. must work almost instantaneously
4. must be most fitted to the crampy character of the disease
5. must be easy to be administered by everyone, even by the illiterate folks, so that it can be given to the illiterate folks, so that it can be given to the sick without mistake.

6. totally without any risk in its application
  7. excellent in protecting the person treating the sick, from himself getting infected."
- How thorough is HAHNEMANN!

His experiments have convinced HAHNEMANN of the fact that the potentised homoeopathic remedies fulfilled all the above criteriae. Yet even today the role of Homoeopathy in epidemics is practically very very small. Shouldn't we ponder why it is so? What should each one of us do to give Homoeopathy its rightful place in epidemics?

In 1833 an epidemic of 'flu raged in Koethen; in simple cases HAHNEMANN recommended the smelling of *Camphor 30* every 15 minutes, and in difficult cases the smelling of *Nux vomica* in the evening.

In 1834 the General Marquis of Angelesea who was injured in the battle of Waterloo (1815) and whose leg had been amputated came under HAHNEMANN's treatment. The patient was suffering from chronic facial neuralgia and figwarts (genital). HAHNEMANN prescribed strict diet and daily walks etc., and of course medicines--*Hepar sulphuris* and later *Thuja* (both in 30 potency). The powder was to be dissolved in 15 tablespoons of water with 4 spoons of white wine (for preservation); from this, one spoon to be taken every morning after stirring the dilution well.

HAHNEMANN had also by now resorted to the administration of the medicines in descending potencies 30, 20, 18, 12, 6, whether oral or by olfaction.

Now in HAHNEMANN's Paris period, 1835 and till 1843 when he left the world the methodology was more or less like this: a powder (e.g. *Nux vomica* to be dissolved in a glass with 15 tablespoons water and out of this one spoon to be again put in another glass of water from which the patient was to take one spoon. This process to be repeated until improved. HAHNEMANN's advice during this period may be seen in the 3rd Vol. of his *Chronic Diseases* (1835).

Even in 1837, in his 80s, HAHNEMANN continued his researches with more powerful potencies. In the fifth volume of the *Chronic Diseases* which appeared in 1839 HAHNEMANN recommended more strokes of succussion to prepare more powerful medicines! The 30th potency which he fixed for practical reasons, as the limit, is now to be raised to higher potencies.

That HAHNEMANN continued to experiment even beyond this period is evident since in the Sixth Edition of the *Organon* he has recommended a *very revolutionary* idea--50 millesimal scale potencies.

"With this method of dynamization (whose products I have found after many painstaking experiments and counter experiments) to be strongest and at the same

time the mildest, i.e. the most perfect)..." says HAHNEMANN.

Please note the terms "experiments and counter-experiments"--only a genuine scientist would announce the results of his experiments after he ensures by counter experiments to *disprove* the results of the experiments, i.e. repeated verifications--facts that will stand the most rigorous tests of time.

In November 1840 HAHNEMANN treated an Architect of 33 years age with Chronic eczema of legs of 30 years duration; had a chancre; treated with *Silver nitrate*.

Black tea and Coffee prohibited.

*Sulphur Q5* (50 millesimal)--one globule in 7 tablespoons water with half spoon alcohol. From this, one tablespoon to be put in one glass of water, stirred well and one spoon to be taken in mornings in empty stomach. After a week since no clear improvement was seen *Sulphur Q6* is prescribed to be taken in same manner as above.

After a week: itching agg. Placebo.

After another week: status-quo. *Sulphur Q7*

Next week: *Mercurius* (Potency not indicated, probably 30c to be taken by olfaction).

Next *Euphorbium 30c* similarly to be diluted and taken. Then almost every week proceeded as follows:

<i>Euphorbium</i>	24c, 18, 9, 12, 6
<i>Bovista</i>	30c
<i>Crotalus</i>	30c, 24, 18
<i>Sulphur</i>	1Q, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
<i>Rhus toxicodendron</i>	1Q, 2, 3, 4
<i>Causticum</i>	30c, 24c

Over a 1 year period the patient got rid of all his ailments. We see that HAHNEMANN went up and down the potency scales, also some in C and some in Q potencies. Why some medicines in the C and some in the Q; why ascend and why descend? A careful study of the cases would reveal. It would also convince us of the directions given in the *Organon*.

In the above cases and in the following years much of the case record is in Melanie HAHNEMANN's handwriting with HAHNEMANN's additions, comments, and prescriptions at places.

In 1841 HAHNEMANN treated a 28 year-old-man for chronic stomach ailment after treatment for syphilis eight years before. Here HAHNEMANN begins with *Cinabaris 21Q*, followed by 24Q, 30Q.

In one of the last cases, in 1842, of a 14 year-old-girl who was suffering from mental ailment HAHNEMANN

gave the Q potencies of *Belladonna*, *Hyoscyamus*, *Sulphur*.

One of HAHNEMANN's earliest cases and a maniac one at that, the Prince Klockenbring, was treated in 1792 with *Stramonium* in 'grain' dose; and in 1842 one of his last cases, is also of a mental ailment of a 14 year-old-girl who was treated with millesimal potencies--over 50 years life dedicated to continuous scientific research and experiment, particularly in pharmacology.

A careful study of the six editions of the Organon would reveal how HAHNEMANN was continuously experimenting and confirming. The fundamentals, the basic ground remained the same, unshaken, unaltered, viz.,--the law of Similars, the single remedy, the minimum dose; the 'totality' and the 'peculiar, rare, strange symptom' as characteristic--the head and heart of homoeopathic therapeutics--all these have been the same all through. HAHNEMANN's experiments were almost exclusively only with regard to Pharmacology, the preparation of the medicines and the doses, the repetition of doses, etc. HAHNEMANN was trying to find the dosage by which every disease can be removed fully and in the shortest possible time without any injury--the sole consideration being the restoration of the sick to health--to cure.

In his records of provings HAHNEMANN not merely noted the symptoms but the exact time, after taking the proving medicine, at which the symptoms appeared.

HAHNEMANN prepared and maintained his own Symptoms Index i.e. Repertory and referred to it.

In spite of his old age, after 80 years, he was still searching for new methods of examination of patients (diagnosis) like auscultation and percussion. The stethoscope he used is available for us to see in the HAHNEMANN Museum, Stuttgart.

He also did not hesitate to experiment with new ideas from whatever source they came from and held to those that stood the clinical test.

For the first time in the history of medicine drugs were tested on healthy humans without any injury to

them. A unique method of research, indeed. Medicine was taken out of speculative philosophy and fixed on practical experiments.

The Organon (VI Edition) which is our text book is the ripe fruit of over 50 years of continuous and careful experiments.

What is the result of HAHNEMANN's experiments? It shattered, literally, the beliefs held over hundreds of years that:

- (1) diseases required medicines which have the opposite action;
- (2) medicines are required in large doses to cure diseases; the more serious, the more the quantity of medicine.

Think of the revolution: (1) diseases required medicines which are capable of producing similar symptoms; (2) quantity of medicine required is the least, infinitesimal, indeed; (3) by friction-by trituration and succussion the properties of natural bodies develop their latent dynamic powers previously imperceptible and as it were lying hidden asleep in them. The powers *electively* affect the vital principle of animal life.

What was the situation in this regard prior to HAHNEMANN? He himself says, "...there is a law of nature by which physiological and pathogenetic forces capable of altering the health of living organisms are generated in the crude substance of a remedy through trituration and succession, even a substance never before found to be medicinal, provided, it is diffused in fixed proportions of an inert, non-medicinal medium. This wonderful law, which is physical but more especially physiological and pathogenetic, was not known before me."

We all homoeopaths, celebrate HAHNEMANN memorial day in a ritualistic manner; we apply the Law of Similars in a routine way, we prescribe the potencies without much thinking. Let us ponder over the once-only-in-the-medical-history revolution by HAHNEMANN whose life was spent in continuous research with the sole aim of curing the sick. A truly dedicated life.

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"The organism is indeed the material instrument of the life, but it is not conceivable without the animation imparted to it by the instinctively perceiving and regulating dynamis, just as the vital force is not conceivable without the organism, consequently the two together constitute a unity."

*Aph. 15, Organon of Medicine by  
Dr. Samuel Hahnemann*

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