

HAHNEMANN AND PSYCHIATRY

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Far too little has been written concerning Hahnemann's contribution to Psychiatry. As in other branches of medicine, he was more than a century ahead of his time. One has only to realize that he was contemporary with Pinel, who was a leader in the so-called "humanitarian era" of psychiatry. This preceded the "descriptive period" when diagnosis of mental illness was under investigation and long before it was conceded that any treatment could be effective. In fact, up to thirty years ago, it was generally believed that such psychoses as schizophrenia were quite incurable and one might well save one's efforts for more rewarding fields.

In his *Organon*, published more than a century-and-a-half ago, Hahnemann says:

"Mental diseases appear to supply the next class of malady which is troublesome to cure. But actually, they are not much more difficult to deal with than any other . . . diseases . . .

"Indeed, they are in no wise really an exceptional class of disease, though often sharply separated from others in classification. For in every other kind of disease, the condition of the mind and of the disposition is invariably altered in some way, and the disposition and mental characteristics of the patient form symptoms of prime importance in all cases which the physician has to treat. Such symptoms must be included in the totality of disease phenomena if a rational homœopathic cure is to be achieved. The creator of medicinal virtues has had particular regard to this important feature of disease, namely, alterations in the mental and moral condition; for there is no drug in the world of any power which does not produce, in healthy persons, very marked mental and moral changes, which are different for every different medicine.

"We shall, therefore, never learn to cure rationally or homœopathically, unless we consider, in every case of disease, alterations in mind and disposition and choose as a counter force the remedy which is capable of causing similar alterations."

Thus it is that the mental symptoms in our materia medica are always stressed and are key-note or guiding symptoms. The mental, emotional and constitutional symptoms of our various remedies immediately suggest to us a particular type of individual or personality. We speak of a *Pulsatilla* patient, a *Nux vomica* personality, a *Chamomilla* individual, etc. Continuing in his *Organon*, Hahnemann says:

"Then all there is to say concerning the cure of diseases of the mind and spirit can be compressed into a few words. They can be cured, like all other diseases, by those remedies, and those alone, which possess a counterforce

most nearly resembling their own, a counterforce which has been displayed in symptoms produced on the mind and body of healthful people. . . .”

There follows a further discussion of the interchange of physical and mental symptoms which sounds strangely like our more recent concept of psychosomatic medicine (a century-and-a-half later) from which he goes to the purely functional psychosis. Here he says:

“Nevertheless there are certain diseases of the disposition which have not simply developed out of bodily diseases; but, on the contrary, with but slight implication of the body, originate and endure from emotional causes, such as continued anxiety, worry, vexation and exposure to terror or fright. In time, this kind of emotional disease affects the bodily health.”

This appears to be the first recorded recognition of purely functional mental illness. It was not until much later that Kraepelin gave us a classification system for the psychoses in which the functional type was clearly differentiated from the organic type. This classification still obtains today, yet Hahnemann made the distinction over one-and-a-half centuries ago.

Continuing, he says:

“Emotional diseases of this order, originating in the mind, are precisely those which can be rapidly transformed into health, both of mind and body, by psychical means, such as a display of confidence, friendly remonstrance, sensible advice, and often by well concealed deception. Their cure by such measures, however, can only be achieved while they are yet recent and the bodily condition little disturbed by them.”

This is a reference to psychotherapy and is basically descriptive of the types in use today. We have added some refinements and have clothed them in beautiful, modern nomenclature so that they sound most impressive but essentially they are unchanged. In this paragraph, also, Hahnemann shows his clear insight into the fact that functional mental illness leads to regressive changes which are irreversible. He recommends early treatment which we now stress in an effort to overcome the symptoms before the patient regresses to a chronic level. We feel that results can be good if treatment is instituted within six months of the onset of recognizable symptoms. When the disease has been of one year's duration, the curability is nearly halved. If the duration has been two years or more, the possibility of recovery is very poor.

Hahnemann's writings show the stress he placed on mental symptoms and this is quite in line with our modern concepts. It is recognized that more than half of all illnesses are mental and that there are comparatively few cases of somatic illness that do not have some psychiatric implications. Thus it is that our materia medica is a treasure trove of remedies through which the homeopathic students can assist in the restoration of mental health. One of the finest publications I have ever read is Herbert A. Roberts' *Studies of Remedies by Comparison*. He compares sixty-six remedies in groups of four and five with detailed cross references for twenty different complexes of mental and emotional symptoms. In more than thirty-five years

of specialized psychiatric practice, I have used our remedies from *Abies nigra* to *Zincum metallicum* with uniformly favorable results. To name all the remedies useful in the various psychoses would entail a review of our materia medica, but I should like to mention just a few that are so outstanding in my experience that they should be remembered in this light.

For the senile, sclerotic group the most commonly used remedies are *Arsenicum album*, *Aurum muriaticum*, *Baryta carbonicum*, *Baryta muriaticum* and *Plumbum*. With the lengthening of the span of life allowing more and more people to live into their senium, we must pay more attention to geriatrics and I know of no field in which homœopathic prescribing is more rewarding.

In the cyclothymic depressions and the more severe depressions of the involitional period, the chief remedies have been *Aurum metallicum*, *Chamomilla*, *Ignatia*, *Lilium tigrinum*, *Nux vomica*, *Pulsatilla*, *Sepia* and *Zincum metallicum*.

In the cyclothymic manic states and the various delirioid states, the most commonly used remedies are *Aconite*, *Belladonna*, *Hyoscyamus*, *Rhus toxicodendron* and *Stramonium*. In the acute alcoholic psychoses, the majority respond to *Avena sativa*, *Capsicum*, *Nux vomica*, *Passiflora* and *Sulphuric acid*. The remedies useful in the various psychoneurotics, particularly hypochondriacal and neurasthenic states, are legion and as variable as the multitudinous symptoms that are offered.

For the schizophrenic psychoses, I know of no particular small group of remedies. There is only one I shall mention here and that is *Phosphoric acid* which is so often indicated in the catatonics. Except for *Baryta carbonica* in the senile, there is no other remedy I have found so frequently useful in psychiatric practice.

In addition to the indicated homœopathic remedy, we must employ any and all adjuvant therapies that may be indicated. These include psychotherapy (always), diet, electrotherapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, recreational therapy, music, education and re-education. The various pharmacologic therapies are invaluable where indicated. I have always felt that the obdurate refusal of many homœopaths to use any of these various adjuvant therapies has limited their usefulness and brought well-merited scorn to our School. Remember that a homœopathic physician is one who adds to his knowledge of medicine a special knowledge of homœopathic therapeutics and observes the Law of Similia. All that pertains to the great field of medical learning is his by tradition, by inheritance and by right.

In summarizing, let us remember that Hahnemann was the first medical writer to proclaim the curability of mental illness; that he first differentiated organic from functional mental illness; that he recognized the development or irreversible changes in chronic mental illness, and advocated early treatment; that he recognized the universality of mental illness and the influence

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FROM MY CASE-BOOK

DR. B. S. SUBBA RAO, D.M.S., A.M.I.H., Arsikere

A boy named S, age 6 years. Male, Hindu, was brought to my hospital at 2 P.M. on 15.9.65 with following history.

Persisting retching and vomiting since 10 A.M., cannot tolerate anything per mouth either solid or liquid, rice, glucose water, milk, water etc. are vomited out after few minutes or ingestion, very pale and dull. On physical examination of the abdomen there was no clinical abnormality, thus I considered it as a case of "Acute gastro-enteritis"—there was a history of ingestion of some bad arakanuts. After considering all these facts I prescribed Ipecac 30/1d without any effect still vomiting was continuous. Then I saw the case again. He was very weak, exhausted, black rings around the eyes, apathetic and listless. On these grounds I prescribed Phosphorus 30/2d—4 hourly interval. After the first dose the vomiting and retching was remarkably controlled and after the second dose the weakness, lethargic attitude etc. was all gone and the patient was quite cheerful and active.

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of psychiatric implications in organic illness; that he stressed the mental symptoms in his materia medica and left us a wealth of remedies that still work just as well as they did in his day.

Let us use this heritage and learn skilfully to combine it with all the adjuvant therapies now at our command to the benefit of mankind and the perpetuation of the Law of Similars.

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